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**USAID REGIONAL PROGRAM FOR THE MANAGEMENT
OF AQUATIC RESOURCES AND ECONOMIC ALTERNATIVES**



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DELIVERABLE NO. 5(B): TOURISM TOOLKIT – SALES AND MARKETING

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Submitted To: Chemonics International

The author's views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

Acronyms

AOL	America On Line
AIM	AOL Instant Messenger
B&B	Bed & Breakfast
CPC	Cost Per Click
CPM	Cost Per Mille
CRM	Customer Relationship Management
CTR	Click Through Rate
DMO	Destination Management Organization
FAM	Familiarization (trip)
FIT	Free and Independent Traveler
FITUR	Spanish International Tourism Fair
GSTC	Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria
HTML	Hyper Text Markup Language
ITB	International Tourism Exchange - Berlin
MSN	Microsoft Network
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OTA	Online Travel Agency
PADI	Professional Association of Diving Instructors
PC	Personal Computer
PPC	Pay Per Click
PR	Public Relations
SEO	Search Engine Optimization
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Timely
SME	Small and Medium Enterprise
SNV	Netherlands Development Organization
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNWTO	United Nations World Tourism Organization
URL	Uniform Resource Locator
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USD	United States Dollar

Preface

In the world of international development...countless manuals have been created that document some aspect of assessing, envisioning and planning for sustainable tourism development. Although well written and informative, many of these manuals take a more theoretical approach and focus on the initial phases of development while neglecting the day-to-day operations of running a small business.

We set out to create something different with the development of the four sustainable tourism toolkits that are a part of this series. The goals were simple. First, to capture lessons learned from years of *on-the-ground experience in developing tourism enterprises*. And second, to never lose focus on creating *practical, relevant, and user-friendly* tools that help ambitious entrepreneurs – particularly in developing countries - understand and complete the steps of growing small and medium-sized tourism enterprises that not only generate jobs and income but also support biodiversity conservation and cultural preservation in the places they exist.

Over the course of the last two decades, the teams that have contributed to the creation of these toolkits have amassed a wealth of experience and knowledge that we've attempted to capture in these toolkits. The successful endeavors are great...but most sustainable tourism development projects are wrought with more trial than triumph. But it is those challenges that have forced us to take these tools apart, redesign and improve them, and test them again...a process that will continue indefinitely.

Toolkit Audience

These toolkits are designed with a “train the trainers” approach in mind. Although the ultimate beneficiary of these toolkits may be rural community members or entrepreneurs living in or near protected areas, the audience for these toolkits are the individuals and organizations providing the technical support to ensure those communities and entrepreneurs are successful.

Toolkit Content and Structure

Sustainable tourism is broad and dynamic. And while these toolkits do not span the entire breadth of this complex industry, they do provide insight into four of the most critical aspects of sustainable tourism development, including:

Toolkit	Contents	Structure
1. Business Planning	Guides the reader through the development of business plans that define sustainable tourism products, financial projections, competition, sales & marketing strategies, operating plans, staffing & training requirements, and linkages to conservation and community development.	Although business planning is a participatory process that directly involves local beneficiaries (i.e. communities), the toolkit assumes the reader is the primary author of the business plan.
2. Operations and Management	Teaches tourism entrepreneurs the day-to-day tasks of managing a tourism enterprise. From reservation and payment systems to tour logistics and financial procedures, this volume of the toolkit focuses on the “nuts & bolts” of running a small business.	These two toolkits are written in a “lesson plan” format because they cover many of the small business operations and management tasks that are the responsibility of local beneficiaries.
3. Staff Training	Includes training resources to build the capacity of local staff who provide sustainable tourism products and services, including: food services, lodging services, and transportation services...amongst others.	Therefore, these toolkits assume the reader is the “trainer” and provide teaching tools and curriculum to train local beneficiaries.
4. Sales and Marketing	A practical guide to tourism sales and marketing, including: marketing strategy, website design, online marketing, social media strategy, public relations, customer relationship management, and distribution.	Assumes both local beneficiaries and/or supporting organizations/individuals may play some role in the sales and marketing activities of the tourism business being developed.

Acknowledgements

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I want to thank Solimar International’s field staff, a group of inspiring and hard-working individuals on the front lines of conservation and community development every day. Their tireless efforts to implement these sustainable tourism development tools have provided the context to make them possible, and the lessons learned to make them better. My deepest thanks to Lucia Prinz, Hamilton McNutt, Eric Lin, Carla Campos, Ashley Silver, Jessie McComb, and Olivier Messmer for their contributions and commitment.

Matthew Humke

**Director of Enterprise Development
Solimar International**

Introduction

This document, the “Sales and Marketing” sustainable tourism toolkit, represents the fourth and final installment in the series. While the first three toolkits focused on developing sustainable tourism business plans, establishing operations and management, and staff training...the “Sales and Marketing” toolkit is designed to help entrepreneurs, community enterprises, and other practitioners market and sell their tourism products and services.

The document begins with methods to developing a strong website and online marketing presence. Topics include basic website design, search engine optimization to improve website visitation, online marketing strategies, and monitoring the effectiveness of websites and online campaigns.

Social media strategies are also covered extensively in this section. Overall strategy is followed by specific instructions for establishing and managing social media tools such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Flickr, blogs, and online travel forums such as TripAdvisor.

Next, the “Sales and Marketing” toolkit provides an overview to good public relations in the travel industry. Attracting and working with writers and editors of guidebooks, travel publications, and online travel planning websites are all discussed.

Customer relationship management is then explored with a focus on communications and relationship cultivation with sales partners and suppliers as well as with direct clients via phone, email, and in-person relationship management techniques.

Finally, travel industry sales and distribution channels are presented as well as unique strategies to identify and capture sales within each one of those channels.

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1. Website and Online

Overview

Within this chapter we will discuss how to establish an online presence through the creation of a website and partnering with existing sites with a special focus on five key areas:

- Planning an Effective Website
- Search Engine Optimization (SEO)
- Search Engine Advertising
- Online Marketing
- Monitoring and Evaluation



1.1 Introduction

In this day and age, the ability to reach anybody at any time in countless places around the world is key to the success of any enterprise. This can only be achieved via the Internet. In order to establish a prominent presence on the Internet, you must take into account many different forms of communication: creating a website, blogging, social media such as Twitter and Facebook, hosting video on YouTube, and many other outlets. Some of these activities may be too technically demanding to do on your own. However, it is your responsibility to make sure that they are executed correctly to make them worth your time and money and assure that your information is available to the people that want it most.

1.2 Planning an Effective Website

Planning a website is like hiring and training a new salesperson. The best thing about this new “employee” is that he is available 24/7. He can provide answers to a whole host of questions, draw in new business, and talk to many more people than you can (an average of 30 – 100 per day according to the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse). As with any new employee, you have to make sure that your new website is trained to look the part, say all the right things, and be an all-around great representative of your enterprise and its goals. The figure below¹ shows some simple steps to planning a new website courtesy of the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse.

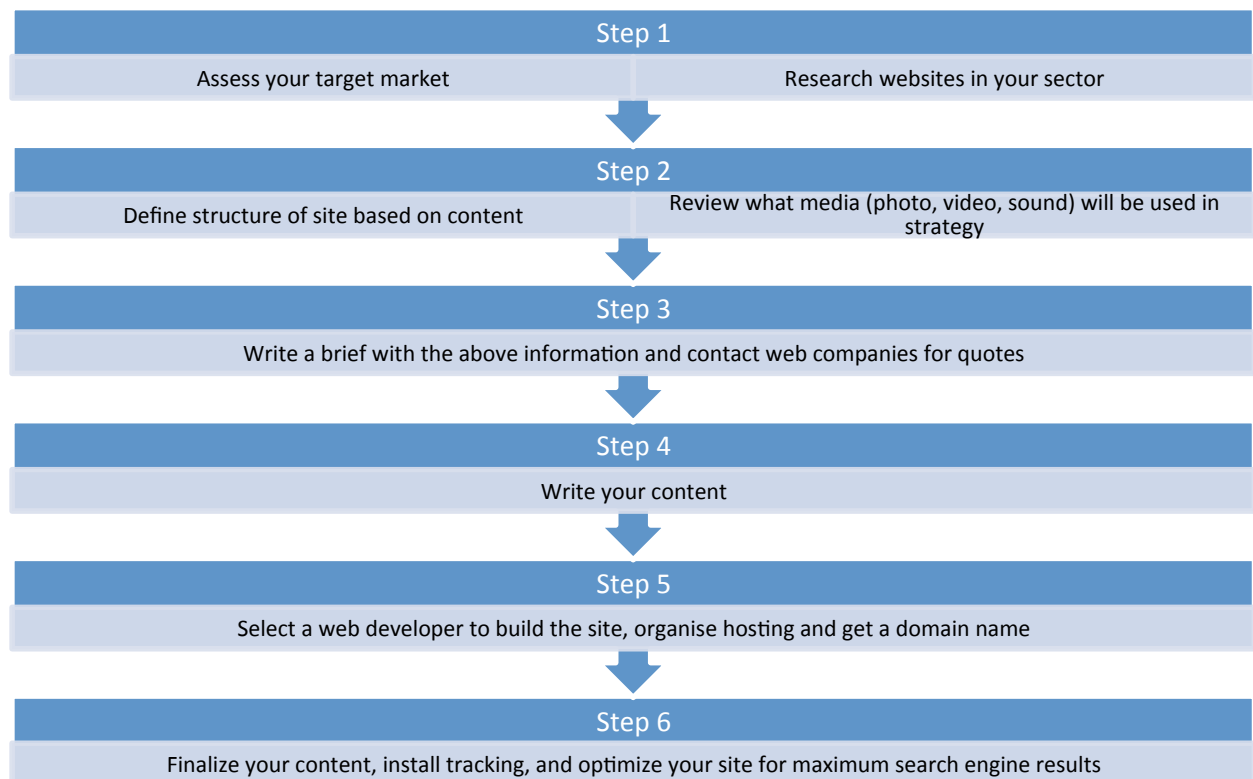


Figure 1: Website Development Process

As you go through the planning process, remember that your website is more than just a brochure to lure people in. Its focus should be “[solving] buyer problems or [answering] questions and [showing] that your organization is...worth doing business with” (Scott). When making decisions about your website, keep these three questions in mind:

1. What is the goal of our enterprise?
2. What is special about us?
3. What do we want to achieve with this site?

Creating or Redesigning, That is the Question

Now that you have decided to establish a better online presence, you have to take the first step by asking this question: Do I make a new site or redo my existing one? There are positive and negative aspects to both of these options. If you redo your existing website, you will not have to bother with

getting a new domain name, and if you already have a content management system (a lot more on what this is later), you will simply be able to make any of the changes described below on your own. This will allow you to firmly establish your web presence at little to no monetary cost.

However, creating a totally new website can be of great benefit. You can use the opportunity to make your site more up to date technically and visually. You can also greatly alter the architecture of your site so that it is much easier to navigate, and the content is clearer and more accessible to users. Something to consider here is the cost of this new site. While you could certainly do it yourself by learning HTML from a book or class, this will take up a large chunk of your time. If you decide to pay someone to create the site for you, this could take up a large chunk of your budget however there are a growing number of affordable, effective options available to tourism enterprises and destinations to meet most any budget. You will have to weigh these options for yourself and decide the course of action depending on your time and fiscal constraints. Whichever path you decide to take, make sure that you consider all of the information in this chapter as integral to your successful online presence, and make sure that you or your web developer include all of these attributes into the design and management of your website.

Domains and Hosting

Choosing your domain name, which includes your site's address, is an all-important first step in putting yourself out on the Internet. Your domain is exactly what it sounds like: your little slice of the Internet, your Internet home. If you choose to have someone else build your site, they will be able to set you up on the Internet and help you get a domain name and address.

However, if you build your site on your own, you will have to search for a way to put it up on the Internet. The search engine Yahoo! has a domain hosting service through their [Yahoo! Small Business services](#). Reputable companies such as [GoDaddy.com](#) also offer the domain hosting business and are useful resources for getting a domain name.

Your domain name consists of two parts: the top-level domain and the second-level domain. Examples of top-level domains are .com, .net, .org, .co.uk, .edu, and .jp. Some of these are restricted to different sectors, such as .edu, which signifies educational institutions. Others are restricted to geographical locations, such as .jp which signifies that your website is hosted in Japan. When choosing a domain name, selecting a different top-level domain will help you reach different audiences and establish your brand. For instance, if you want people in Germany to be able to search for your enterprise's site more easily, you would want to register your site with the domain name .de. The more top-level domains you register yourself for, the less chance there is that people will confuse your site with one that has a similar name and the larger your slice of the Internet will be. Different hosting sites will allow you to select from some or all of the available top-level domains for a cost.

Your second-level domain is the unique address you choose for your site. For example, in [www.google.com](#), Google is the second-level domain. Selecting a second-level domain that is appropriate, concise, and targeted will help drive traffic towards your site because it will be memorable to users and will also be easily found by search engines (more on this later). Because of this, it is important to choose carefully ([GoDaddy.com](#)). Table 1 gives some tips for creating a domain name for a fictional business called Second Home Hostel, located in Sao Paolo, Brazil.

Length	<p>While domain names can be up to 67 characters long, shorter ones are more memorable. They also reduce potential typing errors</p> <p>Good: <i>www.SecondHomeHostel.com</i></p> <p>Bad: <i>www.SecondHomeHostelSaoPaoloBrazil.com</i></p>
Avoid Hyphens and Underscores	<p>These make your name harder to memorize. Also, when people speak about your site, they will talk about it as “SecondHomeHostel.com.” This will not convey any punctuation</p> <p>Bad: <i>www.Second-Home-Hostel.com</i> <i>www.Second_Home_Hostel.com</i></p>
Avoid Numbers	<p>Avoid for the same reasons you avoid hyphens</p> <p>Bad: <i>www.2ndHomeHostel.com</i></p>

Figure 2: Domain Name Tips and Suggestions

Lastly, do not be discouraged if your top choice for a domain name is taken. People often buy up popular domain names when they are thinking of starting a business or so they can sell them later. Instead, think of another great domain name. For example, if you owned Second Home Hostel and *www.SecondHomeHostel.com* was already taken, maybe you could use *www.SecondHomeSaoPaolo.com* or *www.VisitSecondHome.com*.

Site Navigation and Organizing

As you consider how your site is going to look, you have to make sure that users can easily get from place to place. This starts with your home page, which should not only make a great visual impression, but should be clearly designed to drive traffic to other pages within your site. Make sure your site has a clearly marked navigation menu so that users can access all parts of your website from the home page. Building and providing a link to a sitemap (see the next page for an example) is also an easy way for people to find their way around the website. When organizing the links around your site, you have to make sure that you are getting people to access the parts of your site that have information you want them to see. Later in the chapter, we will discuss how you can see what pages people are visiting so that you can alter your content to change users' behavior.

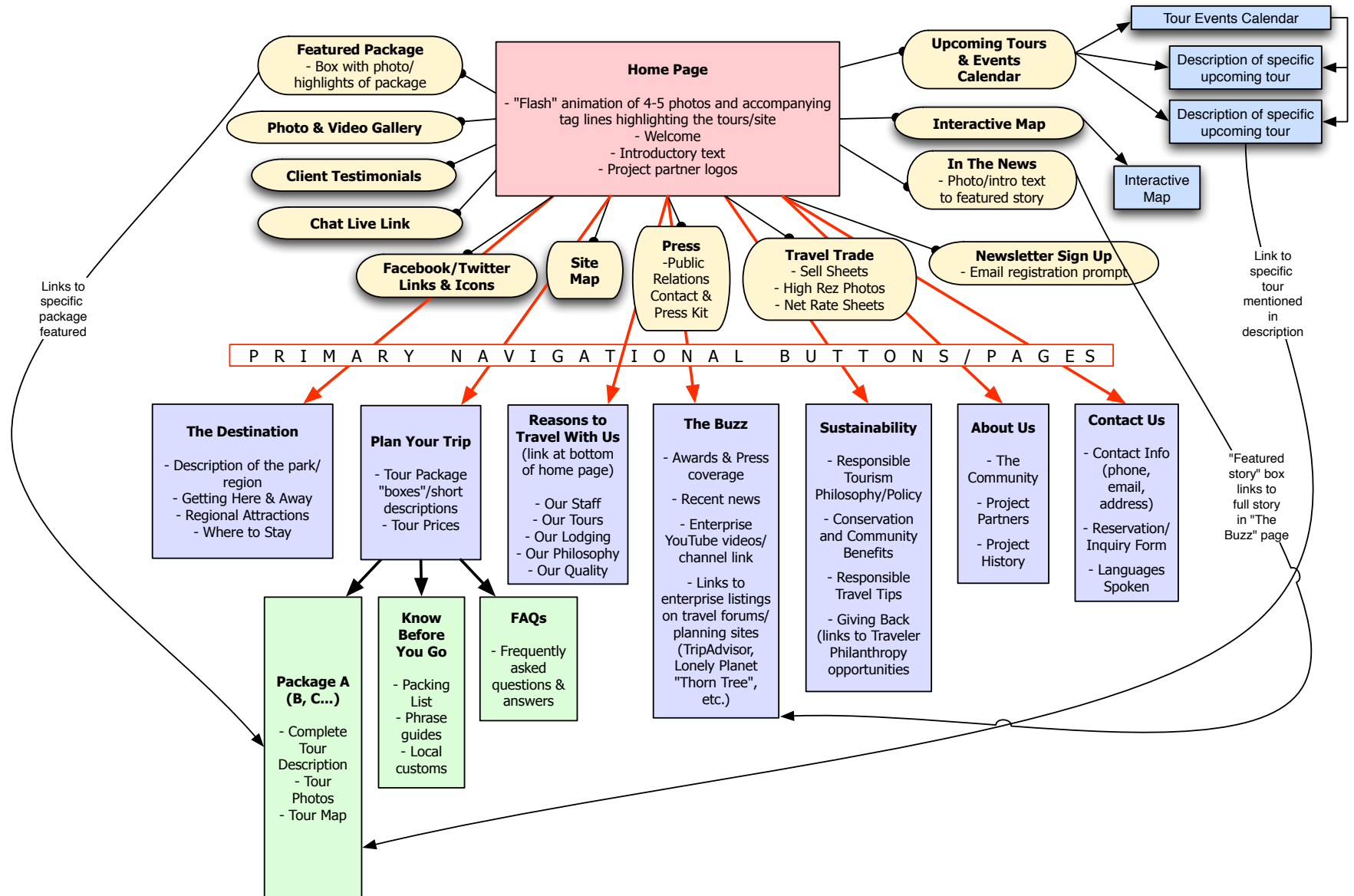


Figure 3: Website Map

Written Content

The written content of a website is the most important part of its design, as it provides all the information that you want your customers to know about you and your enterprise. It helps you determine the different sections of your site and how you want visitors to navigate through them. Content also determines how quickly and easily people can find the information they are looking for as well as how much traffic your site will receive. Now that anyone can easily put up a site about any good, service, or place, you have to make sure your site is not only informative but also the go-to destination on the web for information about your enterprise and all its related activities. One way to ensure this is to pay special attention to *keyword density*.

Keyword density refers to the number of times certain words appear on your site. For example, if your enterprise were a surf shop near Puerto Sandino, Nicaragua, you would want words like surf, surfing, surf shop, Nicaragua, and Puerto Sandino to appear many times throughout your site. If these keywords appear in combinations such as “Puerto Sandino, Nicaragua’s premier surf shop,” then that is even better. This is because, when search engines scour the internet for information, they scan the content of every relevant site and return the most applicable sites to users. So, in this example, if I were traveling to Nicaragua on a surfing vacation and realized that I forgot to pack wax, I would search for “Puerto Sandino surf shop.” My search engine would find your page that advertised your enterprise as “Puerto Sandino, Nicaragua’s premier surf shop” and return your site to me at or near the top of my results list.

With that in mind, you still have to make sure your content is well written. Simple strings of keywords will get people to click to your site, but may not make any sense or will provide little information. When people discover this, they will navigate away and find what they are looking for elsewhere. As we discussed earlier, you are using your site to get users to commit to doing business with you, so the more time they spend on your site, the more likely it is that they will.

Visual Design

While the written content of a site is its most important feature, if it does not come in an attractive package, people will be less receptive to it. In order to enhance the aesthetics of your site as well as supplement any writing, you should consider the use of appropriate pictures, video, audio, maps, etc. Interesting visual and audio media will help keep visitors at your site when they access it and, as we will see later in the chapter, help increase traffic. Make sure to always use up to date and high quality images and videos to maintain a professional look. Consider the following two sites:



mauritius.net

Home : [What's On](#) : [Online Booking](#) : [Fags](#) : [Mailing List](#)

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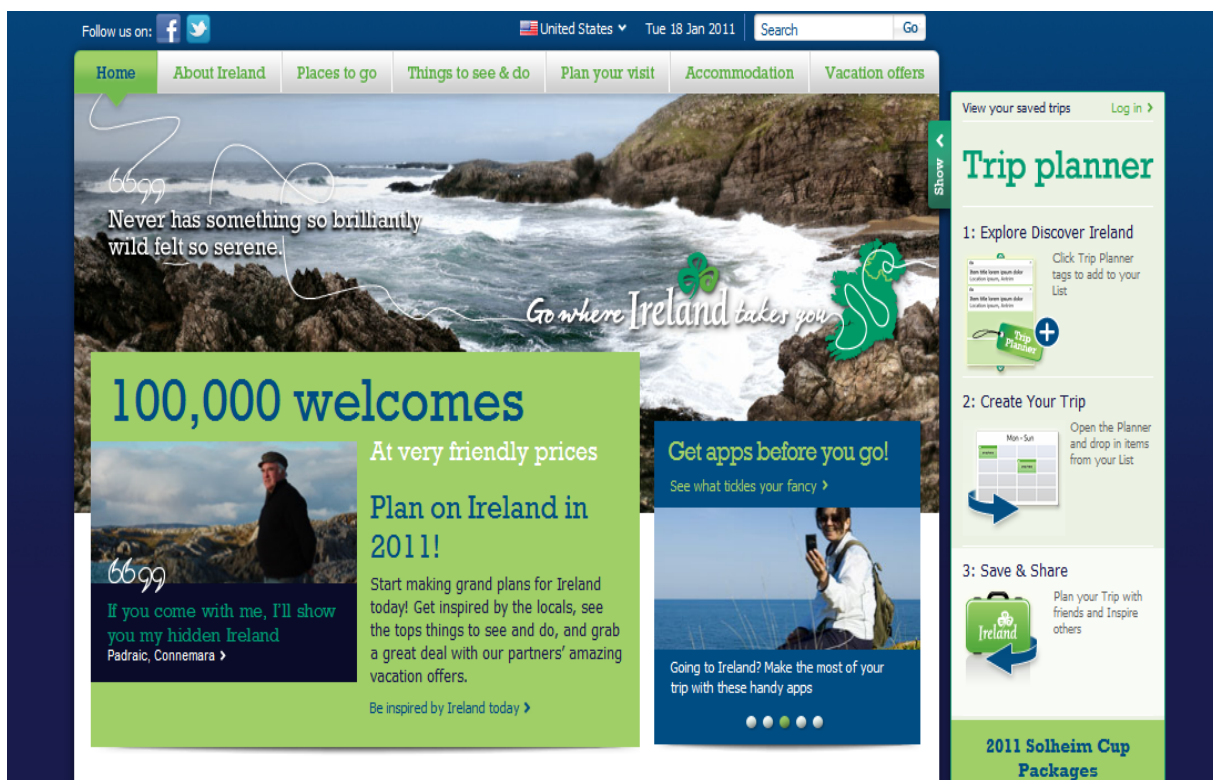
UNFORGETTABLE EXPERIENCE
*Every encounter is an opportunity to discover a friendly face.
 Behind each smile lies the promise of a unique holiday.*

WHAT TO SEE | WHAT TO DO | WHERE TO STAY | GENERAL INFO | BOOK NOW

Welcome home

Mauritius will enchant you, will uplift your soul, making you feel that you belong to the chosen few. Every visitor enjoys personal attention. Every encounter is an opportunity to discover a friendly face. Behind each smile lies the promise of a unique holiday. The contrast of a multitude of colours and tastes, the island, set in its turquoise sea, is an oasis of peace and tranquillity. Mauritius, a melting pot where past and present are smoothly blended together, offers an essential beauty that will compel to return to its shores time and time again. May your stay with us remain engraved in your memory forever.

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2: Create Your Trip
 Open the Planner and drop in items from your List

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Figure 4: Sample Websites

These home pages are easy on the eyes and easy to navigate, with clearly marked links for all kinds of information about these destinations. They also try to encapsulate what visiting these places is all about. Mauritius brands itself as an “Unforgettable Experience” and offers us a look at its beautiful, undisturbed beaches. Ireland wants its visitors to know about its unique local culture. Clicking below the picture of the gentleman in the lower left corner brings us to a site where we can “see Ireland as the locals do” and “meet the real characters of Ireland.” This site also invites us to download applications for smart phones that will give us information useful to planning our trip and enjoying Ireland once we are there. We will talk about apps later in the chapter.

Keeping Content Fresh

Another way to ensure that your site is visited more frequently and shows up higher in search engine results is to make sure content is updating as frequently as possible. This can be achieved through a few different tactics, not all of which require one to rely on constant access to a web developer or a content management system (which we will discuss shortly). While updating the visual and written content of your site is important, it can be time-consuming. Also, if you tweak things incorrectly or move them around too much, then repeat visitors may not be able to find their way around and will stop using your site as a resource. So, if we do not want to be constantly working to change large parts of our site, how can we make daily or, at the very least, weekly updates?

The easiest way to achieve this is to partner with existing websites such as Flickr, Twitter, and Facebook. These sites have features that can be embedded right into your site with a few simple steps. They can be used by anyone in your enterprise that has access to your username and password and accessed on the go via a smart phone for updating even when you are not in the office. The beauty of these kinds of sites is that they do not even require you to be active on them all the time to contribute to fresh content. For example, even if you only post, or tweet, on Twitter once per day, if people retweet or respond to your post, it will show up on your feed. The same goes for the wall of your Facebook fan page. The constant updates that other people create for you will be taken into account when search engines look for sites that are fresh and help boost your rankings without a ton of work from you. The Facebook Developers page (<http://developers.facebook.com/>) has some great information about how to use their various resources and instructions on how to sign up for these kinds of sites can be found in

Social Media Marketing

You should also consider blogs or wikis, where people either inside your enterprise or from the general public can add information on certain pages on your site. These can also be set up on free sites such as Blogger, Wordpress, or Tumblr and linked to your site. These tools can also divulge another side of your enterprise, especially if they are not directly connected to your site. For example, if you were an eco-lodge in Uganda, your blog would not have to strictly speak about your enterprise. It could be a resource for people to learn about the communities of people and animals that live near your enterprise. On this blog, an employee can post pictures and history and add up to date information on the best times and areas to spot certain species. They can ask guest to contribute pictures through Flickr or e-mail. Tumblr even has a feature that allows guests to submit posts to your blog, which you can then screen and add as you see fit. While definitely related to your core enterprise, setting up this kind of forum allows you to branch out and speak about other areas or enterprises you are passionate about. It will also help with a tactic called Back linking, which we will speak about later on.

Technology and Tools

In order to make sure that you can make changes to both the content and design of your site, you need to have a content management system installed. Some of the better known ones are Drupal and

Joomla. These require no special knowledge of codes like HTML, but are simple interfaces that anyone with intermediate computer skills can use. Oftentimes they are free and constantly evolving since they are open-source, which means that users can create add-ons and improvements to optimize and ease use. These systems allow you to take over the management of your site once the developer launches your site on the Internet and hands the reigns over to you. Or, if you have designed the site yourself, content management systems allow those people in your enterprise that may not be familiar with the technical aspects of site creation to make any necessary changes. Another technical problem to be aware of is protection. You want to make sure that your website has appropriate safety measures in place to keep it protected from viruses or other cyber attacks.

Customer Engagement

Engaging your customers in a dialogue is an important tool to creating a great web presence. One way to get in touch with customers is to start a mailing list. There should be a clearly marked link on every page in your site leading to a page where people can enter their e-mail address and some demographic information so that you can contact them. Some of the information should include: age, sex, city, state, and country. While the analytics programs we will discuss later track some similar information, this will give you a much clearer idea of who is accessing your site and gives you direct access to those who wants to learn more about your enterprise. This mailing list can be notified of special promotions, which we will also discuss later in the chapter, and receive newsletters.

Your newsletter is a great way to keep interested people abreast of the latest information about your enterprise. Some features to consider are columns by employees and information about upcoming special events. The frequency of the newsletter is up to you but remember you have to toe a fine line. Communication that is too frequent can become a nuisance. People do not need their inboxes cluttered and might delete your e-mail or remove themselves from your list. Communication that is too infrequent can lead to people forgetting who you are and why they signed up for your list. Striking this balance is difficult, but strive to send out information at least once every four to eight weeks.

As mentioned above, there are many existing sites available to you to boost your web presence. Besides offering you a way to improve your site, these are also avenues for creating a dialogue with your customers. With the advent of social media outlets, customers are taking a bigger interest in not only what companies do, but also the people behind their operations. Customers also want to engage in conversation with other people who share their same views and experiences. This means that your enterprise needs to find its way on to sites like Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube and link these to your own site. Read Chapter 3: Social Media Marketing to find out how to do this.

Mobile Sites

People are using mobile devices such as smart phones, PDAs, and iPads more and more every day, especially when they are traveling and cannot carry around full-size computers in order to access information. This makes it imperative that your site either has a dedicated mobile website version, otherwise you should ensure that the primary site is compatible with these types of mobile devices. Avoid the use of programs like Flash specifically for these purposes. While it might be easier to use for creating a site than learning HTML, many mobile devices cannot read Flash. You also want to keep the size of the files on your mobile site small so that load times are short, because most people using mobile devices want their information even quicker than those who search for it on laptops or desktops. They are most likely on the go and need to find what they are looking for right there and then. Designing a mobile-only site is another option to avoid problems with compatibility on mobile devices.

1.3 Search Engine Optimization

The reason that search engines are so important is because they help you reach your target audience more easily. When people search, they usually do not cast very wide nets. They use specific key words that relate to their individual needs. In order to make sure that your site is one of the go-to locations for people using search engines, there are two strategies you must use. The first is *Search Engine Optimization*.

When people use search engines such as Google, Yahoo!, and Bing, these sites send out bots to look through all the websites with the relevant keywords. As these bots go through numerous sites, they find the ones that are the most relevant and send them back to the user as a list, with their best suggestions listed at the top. Search Engine Optimization (SEO) is the process of altering your content to ensure that it is given the highest-ranking possible by search engines.

The first step in the process of optimizing your website is to run it through something like www.seo-browser.com. This will show what text, pictures, video, etc. from your site is visible to search engines. If your content is presented in a clear, structured manner on this page, then you are already well on your way to being one of the premier sites that people see when they search for information found on your site. However, you can improve this even more in a few simple ways.

Keyword Research

As we discussed earlier in the chapter, keywords are an integral part of getting your site noticed. It is how bots choose what information to send back to users. The more times these words appear on your site, the better off you are. Thus, you want to make sure that you are using the right words in order to differentiate yourself from the rest of the sites on the Internet. The first step in this process simply requires a little intuition. Ask yourself this question: What is my enterprise about? Am I an eco-lodge in South Africa? Am I a specialty store for local crafts in Bolivia? Let's say you are a marlin fishing tour operator in Cabo Frio, Brazil. Obviously, you want your site to be first on the results page when people search phrases such as sport fishing in Brazil, Cabo Frio fishing trips, marlin fishing day trips Brazil, etc. In order to make that happen, make those phrases and others similar to them appear throughout your site. Table 2 gives some more examples of keywords for different enterprises.

Enterprise	Good Keywords and Keyword Groups
SCUBA Dive Tour Operator, Hopkins, Belize	SCUBA diving in Belize, SCUBA dive tours in Hopkins, Glover's Reef Atoll SCUBA tours
Eco-lodge, Solano, Colombia	Eco-lodge in Colombian Amazon, Colombian Amazon destinations, Colombian Amazon accommodations, accommodations in Solano

Table 1: Keyword Examples

The second part of keyword research involves using an analytics program. A program like this will give you great knowledge as to how people arrive at your site because it provides the keywords that people actually search for before they click on your site. This allows you to alter your content accordingly or to figure out how to make what is already on your site more visible. All of this will be touched on later on in this chapter.

Warning! The written content still needs to make sense when viewers click on your site. Google and other search engines penalize sites that just stuff as many keywords as possible onto a page without any regard for grammar or general comprehension.



Title Tags

The title of a page, also known as its title tag, appears at the top of an Internet browser window. These titles are one of the first things that bots search for when they seek information. They also catch users' attention when they appear in search engine results. A clear, unique, concise title for all your pages will go a long way to getting you to the top of the heap. Table 3 gives some guidelines for title tags that are search engine friendly, and the figure below shows the title tag for the Solimar International website, indicated by the red arrow.

Unique:	Each page must have a unique title tag.
Keyword:	It is important the title tag of each page holds the main keywords for that page. Experts also recommend placing important keywords at the beginning of the title.
Readability:	<p>Aim for meaningful page titles and avoid making title tags that are simply a long list of keywords.</p> <p>Good: <i>Backpackers accommodation in Broome</i></p> <p>Bad: <i>Backpackers, cheap, accommodation, Broome, hostel, budget</i></p>
Length:	Search engines will only display the first 65 characters of the title tag. If you require more characters because of your keywords you may go over 65 characters. However, be aware that only the initial 65 will display in search engine results.

Table 2: Title Tag Guidelines

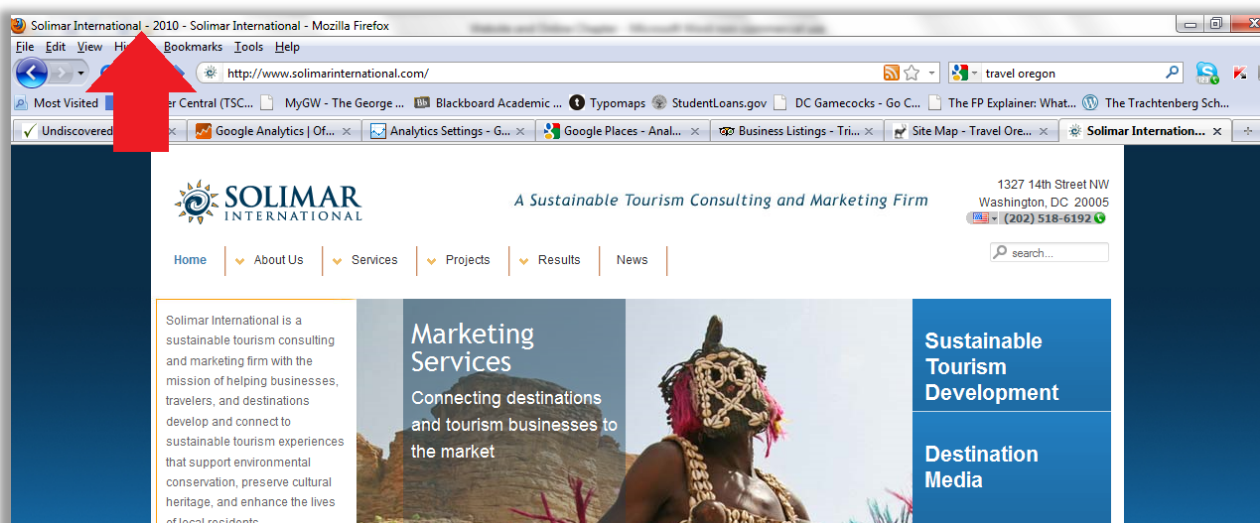


Figure 5: Title Tag Example

Links

The next step in Search Engine Optimization is to focus on the links that appear on your page. Search engines use these to navigate through your site and from one site to another to search for relevant content. If you do not structure your links correctly, search engines, and users, will have a hard time navigating your site. It is crucial that the text of any hyperlink on your page has the keywords to the page where that link is going. Avoid using methods such as “click here,” as search engines will only see the topic of a given page being “click here.”

Alt Attributes for Images

Wherever images are used, you must make sure that they all have *Alt attributes* connected to them. These are simply text descriptions of images so that search engines, which cannot see pictures, can recognize them. It tells the search engine what your image is about so that it can determine its relevance to a user’s search. When speaking with and choosing web developers, make sure they understand how and when to use alt attributes.

Meta Descriptions

Something else to consider is your page’s *meta description*. This is the text that appears below your page’s title when it comes up on a search engine’s results list. While bots do not use this in their search, it is a good way to let people know what is going to be on your site. Think of it as the coming attractions at the movie theater. A good meta tag will encourage users to click on your site. Also, if the keywords they searched for appear in your meta tag, they will be bolded, catching users’ attention. Table 3 gives some guidelines to writing a good meta description and, in figure below, the red arrow is pointing to the meta description for Solimar International’s website.

Unique:	Each page must have a unique description tag
Keyword:	It is important the description holds the main keywords for each page (they get bolded when they match the query of the user)
Readability:	Make the description enticing (so they click!)
Length:	Descriptions can be any length but search engines generally will only display the first 160 characters

Table 3: Meta Description Guidelines

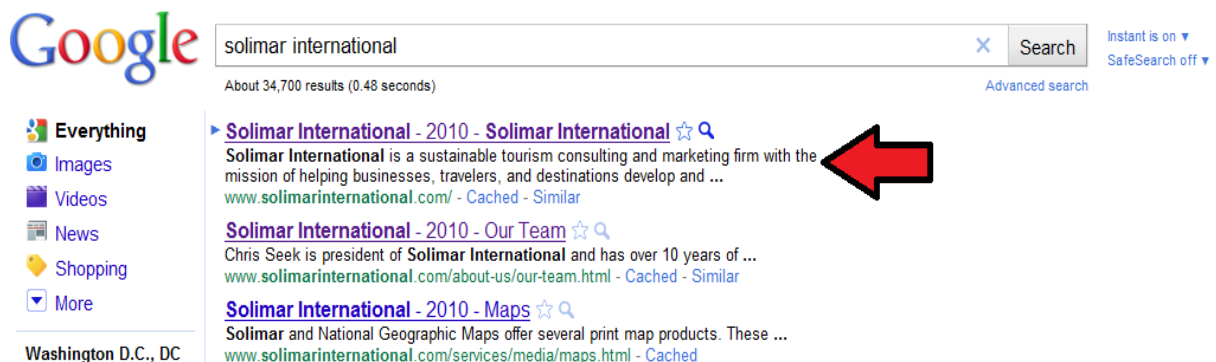


Figure 6: Meta Description Example

Google Places and Map Tags

Another great tool for making your enterprise more visible to search engines is [Google Places](#). This free service shows users your enterprise's location on a map whenever they search for keywords associated with you. It also lets you develop your Place Page by adding a description, pictures, video, coupons, and other content. This page allows users to get directions to your place of business, view your contact information, book a stay at your hotel, and view information in a clear, concise way. Your Place Page also aggregates information from third party websites such as Yelp, travel-booking sites like Orbitz and Travelocity, and local media so that people can read reviews and comments about your enterprise. In addition, Google will track information about how many people see your place page (the number of impressions), activity on your page (in the form of clicks for more information or driving directions and click-throughs to your actual website), and the keywords that drove people to look at your Place Page.

The screenshot shows a Google Maps interface with the search bar containing "solimar international". The results show "Solimar International" with a star icon, address "1327 14th St NW, Suite 320, Washington, DC 20005", phone "(202) 518-6192", and website "solimarinternational.com". It lists categories: Sustainable Tourism Consulting..., Marketing Agency, Consultant, ... and hours: Today 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM. The transit information shows "McPherson Square Station (0.5 mi)" and "Blue Line, Orange Line". The rating is 5 stars. A description states: "Solimar International is a sustainable tourism consulting and marketing firm with the mission of helping businesses, travelers, and destinations develop and connect to sustainable tourism experiences. - From the owner". There are sections for "Details" (Email: info@solimarinternational.com, Business owner, More details) and "Reviews by Google users" (Been here? Rate and review). To the right, there is a map showing the location and a street view image. Below the street view, there is an "Ads" section with a link to "Sustainability Management" and a description: "Execs Explain How Analytics Helps Corp Sustainability-Free Whitepaper".

Figure 7: Example Place Page

Back linking

Because search engine bots, like users, navigate the web via links, it is important to put links up to your page in relevant places. This allows search engines to see the ways you are relevant to different topics and increases your web presence. Part of this process is setting yourself up on social media sites and embedding them on your page, as we discussed earlier. Another way to do this is to blog about other places and things relevant to your work and to include links. The back and forth exchange you have with these sites lets bots see that you have common information. You can also find pages and blogs where people might talk about your enterprise. For example, there might be a section on the website for your local newspaper that has a story about you. Comment on it and be sure to include a link to your site. Building a blog on a site like Tumblr, Blogger, or Wordpress that has links to your site also will help you with Back linking. The more places around the internet that have a link to your site, the more visible you are and, thus, the more traffic you will generate. (<http://www.squidoo.com/how-to-create-backlinks>)

Search Engine Advertising

Pay per Click (PPC): What is it and where can I do it?

Search Engine Advertising is the second tactic you have to employ to make your enterprise more visible on search engines. Search Engine Advertising is paying to have a link to your site appear when people

search particular words or phrases. This ensures that your website will appear in a prominent area of a search engine's results page so as to get users to click on your site. What company or enterprise gets shown is usually based on a bid system where companies compete to have their name appear. Whether or not you appear on the list (or how high) depends on how much you bid per person who clicks on your link, plus the number of people that click your ad divided by the number of people that see it in search results (Scott). Some prominent companies that run these Pay per Click campaigns are [Google AdWords](#), [Yahoo! Search Marketing](#), and [Microsoft AdCenter](#). The figure below shows how ads will appear in search engine results.

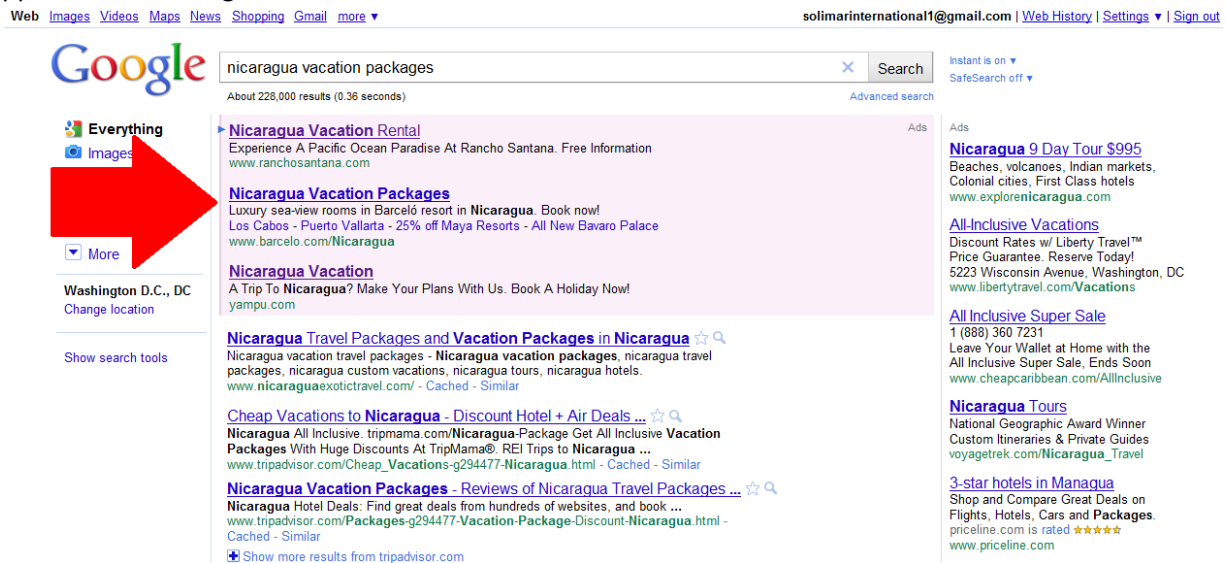


Figure 8: Google AdWords Page Example

The benefits of a PPC campaign are numerous. First, it is cost effective. You only pay for your ad to appear if it is clicked on. Second, it is flexible. Because you can easily maintain it yourself, you can start and stop it at any time, tweaking key words as you learn more about your target market, etc. Third, results are measurable. Because it is all based online, you can easily track how many clicks you are getting, how much your traffic is rising, the number of unique visitors, etc. by using some of the tools we will discuss in the Tracking Results section. All of these factors make PPC campaigns a viable option for many different types of enterprises to explore.

Setting Up PPC Ads

The easiest PPC service to use, and one that links with many other services provided by the same company, is Google AdWords. All you need to sign up for this service is a free Google account and a credit card. There is also a one-time five-dollar activation fee for each advertisement. Once you settle on how you are going to pay, you will create your advertisement.

The most basic ad you can create is a text ad. It has five components: the headline, two description lines, a display URL and a destination URL. The headline has to be short and to the point. If it includes a keyword, it will be bolded, which will catch a user's eye. Your two description lines will briefly talk about what you are offering. These should include any special prices or promotions you may be offering. They should also include a call to action, using words such as Book, Buy, Click, Call Now, and Browse. Using keywords here helps as well. The display URL should be indicative of your site and where the user is going. Oftentimes, URLs can be complicated and lengthy, but here you want to put in something simple. [www.example.com/purchase](#) is something would be appropriate there. It is short and easy for users to

see exactly where they are going. Then, in your destination URL, you will add the page on your site that you want the user to see when they click your ad.

While the wording of your ad is important, the *landing page* for users is the crucial part of the whole campaign. The page users land on has to be the one they are looking for. If you are paying for every click, you have to make sure you are getting something out of it. If people are navigating to your page and leaving without contacting you, purchasing something, or booking a trip with you, your money is wasted (<https://adwords.google.com/support/aw/bin/answer.py?hl=en&answer=27648>). Therefore, in order to ensure that you are targeting the right audience and getting them the right information, you must do some research. Using tools such as Google Analytics, which we will discuss in the next section, you can find the keywords that people are using to arrive at your site. You can also see the individual pages that people are visiting most frequently on your website. For more information on this, see the Analytics and Keyword Research sections of this chapter. More importantly, you can see the individual pages of your site that people “bounce” and exit from most often. More information about what these mean and how you can address problems with them will be discussed later in the chapter.

Using Google AdWords, there are also options to lengthen your ads at a cost or to create ads with images that are shown on the Google Display Network. Members of this Network are sites that Google has partnered with in order to provide targeted advertising to customers. You can also create advertisements that are designed for viewing on mobile devices. The process for creating all of these is similar to that of creating text ads.

Account Management

Once you have some campaigns up and running, Google AdWords will track the performance of each of them. The program will track how many clicks and impressions, or views, your ad gets. Using these two metrics, it will calculate your *click-through rate* (CTR), which is the number of clicks your ad receives, divided by the number of impressions it receives. It also tracks the average *cost per click* (CPC), *cost per mille* (CPM; the cost to show the ad to 1000 people), and total cost. As you gather more information about your target market, you can alter the keywords that are associated with different ad campaigns. You can also change the geographic scope of your ad when you find out which countries, states, provinces and cities your users are coming from. The interface and navigation, mostly using dropdown menus, can be easily updated and used by anyone with basic computer knowledge.

1.4 Online Marketing

Niche Campaigns

While most of this chapter has focused on how to make your enterprise more visible to the internet in general, there is something to be said for targeted marketing campaigns. Knowing your target audience, what other sites they visit, and how you can get in touch with them more easily will help you get information in the right hands. These kinds of niche campaigns can take many different forms and thinking outside the box is encouraged here. The more you know about your target market, the easier it will be to pinpoint how and where to get into their sphere of influence.

Analytics programs will once again help you here. One of the tools these programs provide is a list of sites that refer users to your page. If some of these sites can be advertised on, contact the person who runs them and see how you can get involved. This is an easy way to get information into the hands of people you already know want to see it. One thing to note here, however, is if they can provide you with some way to get data on your campaign's success. If not, this could be a riskier venture than one might think.

Another way to get in touch with your niche audience is through contests. For example, if you are a safari tour operator, you could sponsor a photography contest. Have your guests or those on your mailing list submit pictures via e-mail, Flickr, or through your Tumblr and post them on your website. Select or, better yet, have visitors to your site vote, on the best pictures. The winners can receive any number of prizes from discounted rates to gift certificates and so on. You can also sponsor contests like these alongside other enterprises from your destination. This will help you not only engage with your customers but help you partner with other enterprises, both of which make you more visible on the internet and outside of it.

Mobile Applications

As we discussed earlier, the use of mobile devices is becoming more prevalent. Travelers are using smart phones and iPads to gather information about a destination before they go. Designing a mobile application is a great way to gain exposure and to engage and inform customers. However, this is not something that a novice can do as it requires technical expertise that the average computer user probably does not have. If you are looking to get an app built, consult a developer who can guide you through the process from design to publishing.

As with your site, you have to make sure you have control of your app's content. While it cannot be adapted with a content management system like a website, the same rules of design apply. With an app, though, you want to convey very precise information that is highly interactive. Some great examples of apps are interactive maps and virtual tours. Discover Ireland provides [many different apps](#) ranging from information about sporting events to restaurant and bar guides and maps of Dublin and Belfast.



Figure 9: Examples of Mobile Applications or "Apps"

Electronic Fliers

Electronic fliers are another great way to promote your enterprise. They can be easily developed using programs such as Photoshop or Paint. Electronic Fliers are exactly what they sound like: the same flier you would put up on a bulletin board or other public space, except these will be going out over the internet. These are not meant to be newsletters. They are simply promotional material with some pictures and text that will have information about how to contact you via internet, phone, e-mail, etc. They can then be sent out to people on your e-mail mailing list, put up on your website if you have a special promotions page, or put up on your social media pages (e.g. as a note on Facebook or as a link in one of your tweets).

The benefit of these is that they reach and reward people with whom your enterprise has a good rapport. Those that are your fan on Facebook, following you on Twitter, or on your mailing list are people who want to do business with you. They are also people that have most likely visited you before. Their repeat business is important as is their word of mouth advertising, so keeping these people informed and giving them access to special promotions keeps them loyal to your product, hopefully resulting in more business.

The image shows a promotional flier for American Airlines. At the top, there's a navigation bar with links: [Reservations](#), [Redeem Miles](#), [My Account](#), and [Fare Sales & Offers](#). Below this is a large banner image of a park with autumn trees and a lake. The text on the banner reads "U.S. CITIES ON SALE NOW." Below the banner, it says "Fares as low as \$59* on American Airlines and American Eagle®". There are two bullet points: "• Travel September 19, 2011, through December 14, 2011" and "• Purchase your ticket by **Thursday, September 8, 2011**". A red button says "VIEW COMPLETE DETAILS". Below that, a small note says "*Each way, based on round-trip purchase. Taxes and fees apply." The next section is a search bar titled "SEARCH FOR FLIGHTS NOW ON AA.COM". It has fields for "From", "To", "Depart", "Return", and "Passengers", each with a dropdown arrow. A red button labeled "SEARCH AA.COM" is to the right. Below the search bar, there's the "American Airlines Vacations" logo with "AAVacations.com" underneath. To the right of the logo is a circular seal that says "LOWEST GUARANTEED PRICES". Further right are social media icons for Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. At the bottom, there's a footer with links: [Manage Your Email Preferences](#), [Update Your Personal Information](#), [Unsubscribe](#), and [View Privacy Policy](#).

Figure 10: Electronic Flier Example

1.5 Monitoring and Evaluation

How to Track Analytics

Investing time and money into establishing your online presence is futile if you cannot track any results. You need to find ways to measure your successes and correct any mistakes. As we saw earlier, tools such as Google Places track information about the people that come to your Places page. If you want to track the metrics on your individual website, though, Google offers another tool called [Google Analytics](http://www.google.com/analytics/) (<http://www.google.com/analytics/>) to capture this information. Google Analytics is a free service; all you need to do is register yourself with a Google account.

After you sign in, you will be prompted to enter the address of your site and some other personal information. Then, the program will show you a few lines of HTML code. This can be cut and pasted into your content management system. Where you place this code is very important. It has to be put into a feature of your site that appears on every single page, such as the header. The program provides you with some pointers on this and other places where you should insert the code it gives you. If it is not placed in a feature that appears on all your pages, all of your pages will not be tracked and you will be receiving faulty information. After this, you should go back to the Google Analytics page to make sure your code is being read properly. On the Overview page, a check mark will appear in the status column if you have installed your code properly, as you can see in the figure below. Now, wait at least 24 hours for information to be collected, and, when you log back in, click on view report. This will take you to a page with a detailed information about dozens of different measurements that you can use to make your site better.

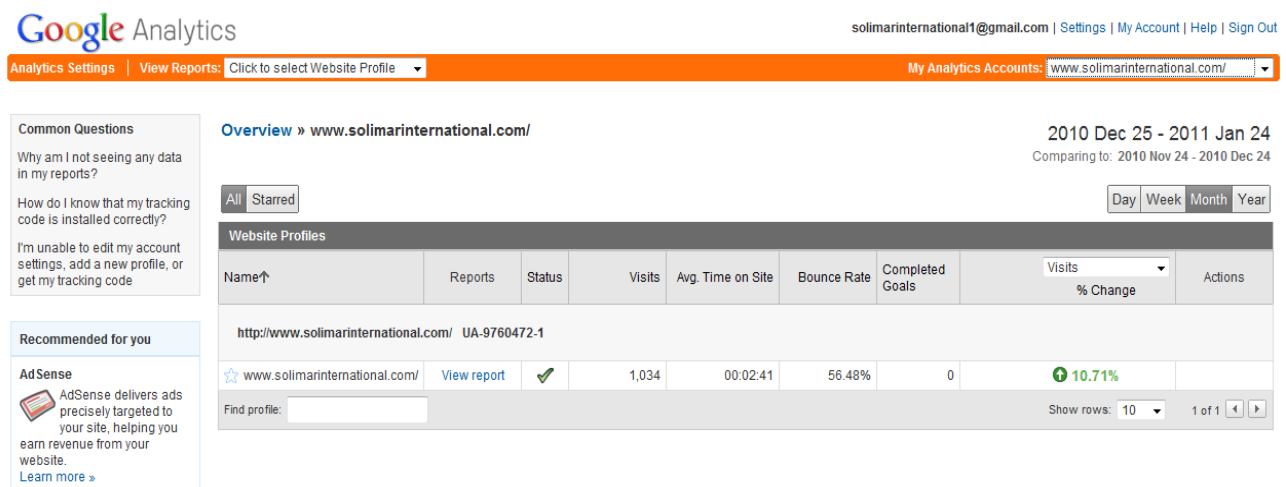


Figure 11: Google Analytics Overview Webpage

Analytics Measurement, Reporting, and Evaluation

Now that you are collecting data about the visitors to your site, it is important that you understand the measures and information that Google Analytics gives you. From the Dashboard, you can navigate to view metrics that are divided into three categories: Visitors, Traffic Sources, and Content. Within these are subcategories that offer you detailed information about who visits your site, how they get there, and what they see when they arrive. In this section, we are going to explore some of these categories, what they mean, and how you can use combine this information with knowledge you have gained from this chapter to make your site better. That said, Google Analytics is a complex program that has many components and options and this is just a basic tutorial. To learn more about the many features of this

system, the Google Analytics [homepage](http://www.google.com/analytics) (www.google.com/analytics) has many excellent resources from training videos to a help center to a blog where they unveil their latest modifications and provide news for users.

Visitors Section

On the Visitors Overview page, you can view general information about the people that visit your website. The figure below is the Visitors Overview page for the Solimar International website, showing all of these metrics. While you want the number of visits to increase, there are a few more important measures to which you have to pay close attention. The first is the number of *unique visitors*. This is because the number of page visits takes into account not only new users but returning ones. If the only people viewing your site are people that have been there before, it means that your audience consists of people that already know your product. You want as many new people to visit your site as possible.



Figure 12: Google Analytics Visitors Overview Page

Another measure to watch is the average number of page views. This counts the number of individual pages within your site that visitors see, divided by the total number of visitors. Coupled with the average time spent on your site, these tell you how much information people are looking for and how long they are taking to find it. Alongside this, you want to watch your *bounce rate*, which is “the percentage of single-page visits or visits in which the person left your site from the entrance (landing) page” (<http://www.google.com/support/analytics/bin/answer.py?hl=en&answer=81986>). High bounce rates on particular pages mean that the information presented there probably does not answer users’ questions so they are navigating away immediately. This means that these pages are not relevant to the links you have set up from your ads and your destination URLs need to be changed, or that the links in your navigation bar are not properly highlighting the information that a page is going to display. The *Content Section*, which we will explore soon, will tell you which pages within your site have the highest bounce rates.

In the visitors section, you can also view some information about what kind of technology your visitors use. You can see their Internet connection speeds, which will tell you how much content you can have on your page. If, say, half of your visitors are using dialup connections, you cannot have too many pictures or videos on your page because they take too long to load. If people have to wait too long for

their information, they will just look elsewhere. There are also analytics here about what mobile devices people are using to view your site. This is important when you think about building apps since each system, Apple, Blackberry, and Droid, have different specifications and stores for their applications.

Geographic information is also available here. Click on the *Map Overlay* link and you will be shown a map of the world, each country shaded in a different color of green. The darker the green, the more visits that came from that country during the date range you select. The figure below is an example of one of these maps. A table at the bottom of this page will show you information about pages per visit, time spent on your site, the percentage of new visits, and bounce rate for different countries. You can also customize the table using the dropdown menu next to the Dimensions option to see information about technology, keywords, and ad campaigns clicked on for different geographic areas. Clicking on each country will give you more specific data about states, provinces, and cities. This information is especially important when creating you Pay per Click campaigns as it will tell you how and where to focus your efforts.

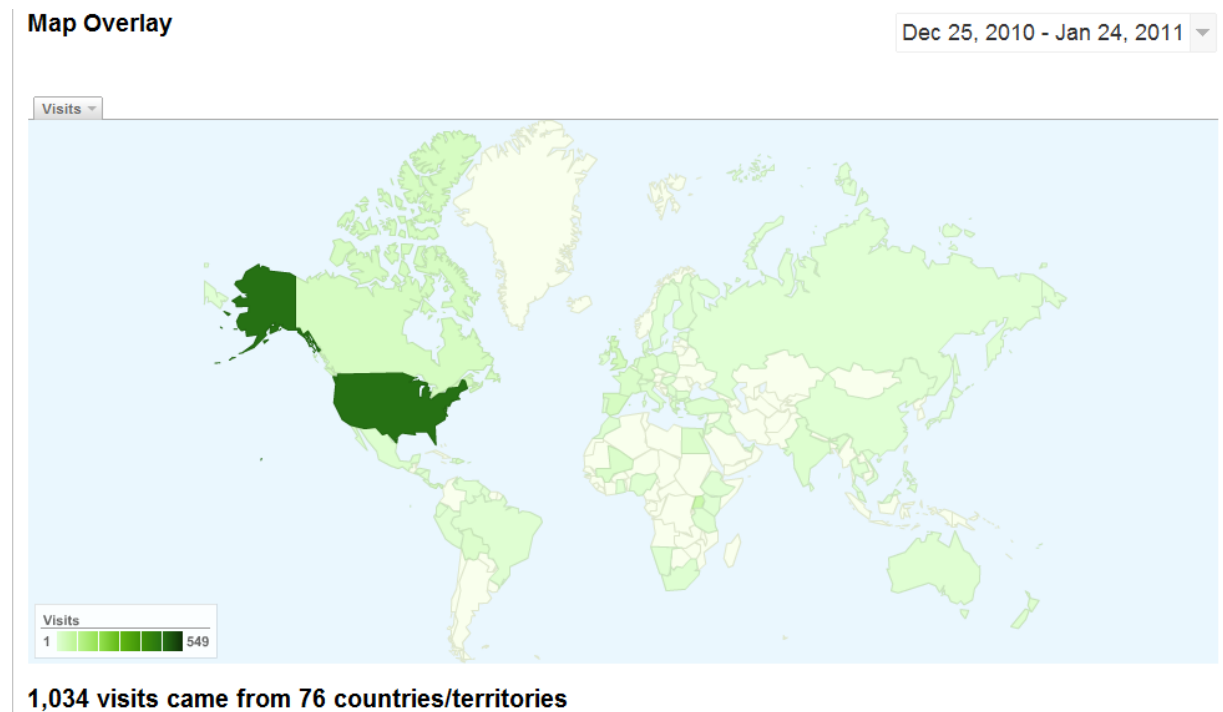


Figure 13: Google Analytics Map Overlay Page

Traffic Sources Section

The traffic sources section gives you information about how people arrive at your site. It can also be used in conjunction with your AdWords account to have all of your analytics information in one place. The figure below shows you an example of the page you arrive at when you click through to this section.

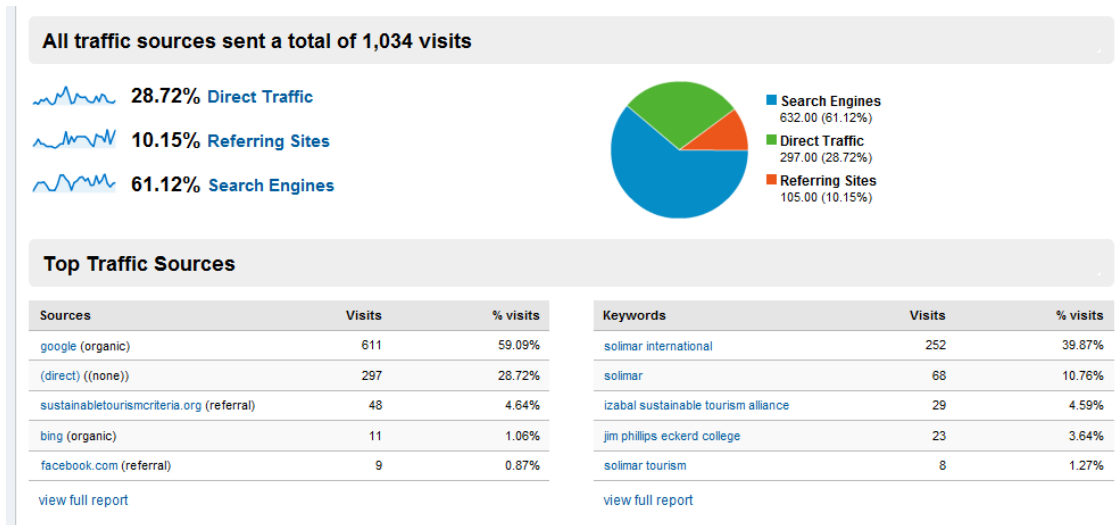


Figure 14: Google Analysis Traffic Sources Webpage

The pie chart shows you the path that people take to your site. Direct traffic refers to that percentage of people that type your website's address (www.example.com) into their browser. The proportion of people coming from referring sites are those that clicked on links to your site from anywhere else on the internet that is not a search engine. Search engines are the percentage of visitors to your site that arrived there via Google, Bing, Yahoo!, etc. Clicking on any of those titles will give you more information about the people who used these different means to arrive at your site. The *Direct Traffic* link provides the number visits driven by that source, percentage of new visits, bounce rates, etc. Clicking on *Referring Sites* gives you the list of sites people were using before they navigated over to your site plus all their visit information. The *Search Engine* page shows what search engines people used to find your site. Once again, you can use dropdown menus on each of these pages to see information about technology, keywords, and geography.

The most important part of this section, and possibly the whole Google Analytics program, is the Keywords page. This provides you with all the keywords that people searched to reach your website. Using this information, you can alter your content to make sure these combinations of words appear all around your site as discussed in the Keyword Density part of this chapter. It also allows you to see what keywords you should use in your AdWords account to attract impressions and clicks.

Content Section

The final section of note delves into your site's content. It breaks down the most visited parts of your site, shows you how much time people spend there, and if people are finding the information they are looking for when they got to the different pages in your site. Three subsections are important to follow regularly in this section. First is Top Content. This shows the most viewed pages on your site. As much as we have talked about getting people the information they are looking for, there is also certain information that we would like to highlight about ourselves. There are certain pages on our site that we would like people to see. If these are not appearing near the top of your most viewed content, there is something wrong. You need to go back and check your link structure, keyword density, etc., or you have to change the design of your site so that these pages are somehow highlighted.

The next important subsection is *Top Landing Pages*. This ranks the pages that users arrive at when they first arrive at your site. If you have set up your AdWords campaigns well, the pages you set as the destination URLs should rank very high. Another thing to note here are the bounce rates for the various pages. If they are high for certain pages it probably means that the information there is poor or incorrect. It shows that people are landing on this page from a search engine or referral site, not finding what they are looking for and leaving without viewing anything else on your site. To fix these, you need to go back to these pages and see what might be missing or could be changed in order to provide visitors with adequate information. It may be as simple as adding clearer headings or rearranging your content. This must be an on-going process to make sure that people are getting the information they need from your site.

The last subsection to monitor is *Top Exit Pages*. This ranks the number of exits for the different pages on your site. High exit rates can be misleading, but should be taken into consideration. Exit rates differ from bounce rates in that they are only counted after users navigate through multiple pages of your site. If the highest exit rates are deep in your site, it probably means that people are finding the information they need and then navigating away. One way to see if this is generally true is to look at the average time spent on your site. If it is staying the same or getting longer, then you are most likely in good shape. People are staying at your site because they are finding what they need.

2. Social Media Strategy

Overview

Within this chapter, we will discuss:

- What social media is and why you should use it
- How to develop a social media strategy that best suits your enterprise and coincides with your overall marketing strategy
- The social media tools available for use and how to decide which social media tools your enterprise should utilize
- How to begin using social media tools and establish a presence online
- How to manage various social media tools and coordinate online activity
- How to monitor and evaluate the success of your social media marketing campaign



2.1 Introduction

In recent years, social media websites have certainly grown in popularity, as more and more people become members of the online community and interact with one another through the internet. Perhaps you keep in touch with family and friends through a personal Facebook page, watch the latest music videos on YouTube, or maintain a weekly blog about your experiences. Through these mediums, you connect with people and businesses around the world.

In this way, social media has emerged as another tool to be used in your enterprise's marketing strategy, offering an alternative to traditional marketing outlets. Social media provides a way to increase awareness of your enterprise and develop your relationships with your customers before they travel, while they travel, and once they have returned home. In the travel and tourism industry, the use of social media is becoming necessary to the effective marketing of a destination, for people increasingly utilize the Internet to research and plan their vacations. Social media tools allow you to become a part of this process, increase your web presence, and enhance your marketing efforts.

2.2 What is Social Media?

Social media is the media and technology used for the purposes of communication and collaboration in a web-based forum. Through social media websites, people share stories and experiences, discuss and debate, and connect with one another, engaging in conversation using photos, videos, text posts, and audio clips. Because of its availability on the Internet, social media is highly accessible and utilized by many people around the world. Value is created as individuals, businesses, and other types of organizations interact and generate web content.



Examples of social media websites include Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, and YouTube. These social media tools and others will be discussed at greater length later in the chapter.

Why Use Social Media?

Whether you decide to actively publish content to the internet or simply observe what others write about you, there are many benefits to using social media when marketing sustainable tourism destinations.

Below are some reasons describing why you should develop and implement a social media strategy:

- The Internet provides a forum in which people are constantly communicating with one another. In fact, when planning a vacation, many people use the Internet to obtain information, research and compare options, and to talk with other travelers. Often, people share their travel experiences, offer and seek advice, and provide feedback to enterprises. Therefore, it is essential for you to become aware of what people are saying about your enterprise and take part in the conversation.
- Using social media, you can view and respond to customer feedback. Learn what people enjoy about your offering and what they think you can improve, address criticism, and enhance your image. By taking part in this online dialogue, you can shape it in a way that benefits you.
- A social media strategy offers a way to reach and attract customers, as you promote your destination to a wide audience. For instance, consider whom your enterprise is trying to reach; many of them are online. Furthermore, through the Internet and social media tools, you can more readily reach niche audiences such as travelers concerned with sustainable tourism.
- Social media allows you to increase your web presence and reach as one aspect of an online marketing campaign.
- Through the use of social media, you can engage with customers directly and interact with them one-on-one. This approach helps to build customer relationships, establish trust, and maintain a dialogue.
- Social media helps you to better influence how customers view your enterprise and gives you the ability to generate positive perceptions.
- With social media, you can contribute knowledge to online discussions regarding travel, sustainable tourism, your destination, or your enterprise. You can also inform travelers about unique opportunities and experiences in a way that is readily accessible and easy to read.

- The cost incurred to use social media tools is very low. Most of the major social media sites are free!
- Many social media tools offer the ability to track the results of your online efforts and evaluate the effectiveness of your social media marketing campaign.

2.3 Social Media Strategy and Management

Before diving into the world of social media, it is important to outline a social media strategy that aligns with your overall marketing strategy and takes into consideration your enterprises' unique capabilities and restraints. In this way, your use of social media should complement other marketing efforts so that you may project a consistent message and image.

Social media marketing refers to the utilization of social media tools, such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, in an enterprise's marketing activities. For instance, social media is used to promote a product or service, increase customers' awareness, manage customer relationships, or communicate a special offer among other marketing activities. Social media strategy reflects the way in which you will achieve your marketing goals and objectives as related to social media, providing direction as you use various social media tools. In this way, developing a social media strategy is key to executing a successful social media marketing campaign.

Process: How develop your social media strategy



Step 1 – Determine Your Goals and Objectives

In order to successfully execute a social media strategy, you must possess a clear idea of what you hope to achieve through your use of social media. Considering your enterprise's mission, vision, and overall marketing plan, determine your social media goals and share these goals with other members of your organization (involve them), particularly those who will be involved in implementing your social media strategy. Such actions will ensure that everyone is on the same page. Your goals should be based upon past experiences, including successes and failures, as well as your level of familiarity and expertise with social media.

Furthermore, goals that you set for your enterprise should be measurable and incorporate deadlines. For example, sales and costs can be measured over a period of time. This step will allow you to determine if you have accomplished what you set out to do within a given timeframe. You will then have the ability to evaluate your social media strategy, determine its effectiveness, and make any necessary changes based upon what you have put into the process and what your efforts have produced.

In some cases, you will not be able to quantify a goal due to its particular nature; however, qualitative goals remain important to social media strategy. For instance, it is difficult to measure the quality of your relationships with your customers using a numerical value because the connection that you have with your customers is felt and experienced. In this case, you would need to use other indicators, such as the number of repeat customers or content of customer comments, in order to evaluate the quality of your customer relations. Different enterprises will establish different objectives based upon their unique circumstances, perceived purpose, and level of experience.

Examples of social media goals (both qualitative and quantitative) include:

- Increase customers' knowledge of your destination or product and service offering over the next 3 months
- Increase traffic on enterprise's website by 20% within 6 months
- Improve relations with customers by increasing communication and gaining customer feedback over the next 6 months

- Manage reputation and image throughout the upcoming year
- Increase customer inquiries by 15% within 1 year

Consider outlining your goals using a table in a Word document or an Excel spreadsheet so that you may easily monitor your progress.

Step 2 – Develop an Organizational Policy

An important aspect of developing your social media strategy is the articulation of an organizational policy toward the use of social media. Organizational policy refers to the rules, standards, and values that direct and inform employees' behavior. It provides guidance for an enterprise's employees, holds them accountable for their actions, and promotes consistency. Typically, organizational policy expresses a desired outcome and guidelines for achieving that outcome while providing the rationale for doing so.

Organizational policy is important to implementing a social media strategy, especially if your enterprise is new to social media, because it provides direction to employees and offers them a context in which to perform their duties. Your policy toward social media should align with your overall marketing strategy as well as any broader organizational policies.

A social media policy should include an explanation of the purpose of the policy, a demonstration of organizational commitment to certain standards, and a description of who is responsible for abiding by the policy. Generally, an organizational policy applies to all employees, requiring a specified level of conduct.

In addition, an organizational policy for social media should address guidelines regarding etiquette and appropriate content. Such a policy will enable members of your organization to act responsibly and speak in a unified voice and style, as you implement your social media strategy. This is important to promoting a consistent image of your enterprise.

For instance, when uploading content to a social media website, do not post anything that is inflammatory, insensitive, offensive, or hostile. You do not want to alienate potential customers or deter people from building a relationship with your enterprise. Instead, use social media to maintain a positive image of your enterprise. In this way, only post truthful and accurate content in order to preserve the integrity of your organization.

Also, recognize that you are speaking on behalf of the enterprise, and present yourself honestly as a representative of the enterprise on all social media forums. Individual members of your organization should be held accountable for what they post online.

Step 3 – Assign Responsibility

Once you have determined your objectives and developed an organizational policy toward social media, decide who will be held accountable for implementing your social media strategy. You may want to consider designating someone, potentially a Social Media Manager, who will oversee your enterprise's social media accounts, draft content, and post it to the Internet via social media tools. This approach consolidates responsibility into one place, helping to avoid inconsistencies and miscommunication. Nonetheless, the Social Media Manager should utilize input from other members of the organization

such as tour guides, cooks, guest services, and managers in order to generate interesting and informative media.

When assigning responsibility, it is important to consider the resources that are available to your enterprise, including time and money. Ask yourself:

- Do I (or another member of my organization) have the time to regularly update the enterprise's social media pages?
- How much time am I willing to commit to maintaining and updating my social media accounts?
- Do I need to hire someone who will fulfill the social media function? And would the cost of doing so fit into my overall marketing budget and strategy?

Once you have decided who will be tasked with social media duties, ensure that they are aware of their responsibilities as well as your enterprise's social media goals, objectives, and organizational policy. In fact, you may want to include a potential Social Media Manager in the process of developing your social media strategy.

Step 4 - Determine Where Your Target Market is Located Online

At this stage, you should have a clear understanding of your target market, for this is an important aspect of an overall marketing strategy. Please review the Marketing Strategy Chapter for additional information regarding the identification of a target market.

When implementing a social media strategy, it is important to determine where your target market is located online. This process involves figuring out what social media tools members of your target market are using and to which social networks they belong. You can obtain such information using a variety of tactics:

- Check to see if your local tourism association makes any recommendations regarding social media use or if it uses any social media tools
- Observe the social media use of similar enterprises who are trying to reach a comparable market
- Monitor the actions of members of your target market online.
 - Begin by creating accounts on various social media websites such as Facebook and Twitter, and then use the search feature to type in various keywords related to your destination, enterprise, or product/service offering.
 - You will be able to see who is interested in your destination and the services that you provide, identify possible pages with which to begin building your network, and ensure that there is enough interest among social media users to support your enterprise.
 - For example, search for a destination, such as "Costa Rica" or "Madagascar," or an activity, such as "surfing" or "scuba diving" on Facebook and Twitter. You will be able to observe who is currently posting about these topics, what they are saying, and who they are following.

Step 5 - Construct a Social Media Schedule

Based upon where you choose to concentrate your efforts, construct a social media schedule which outlines when you will be updating your enterprise's social media accounts and who will be updating them. When making a schedule, consider how much time you are willing and able to devote to updating,

in addition to what social media tools you will use. Such decisions should be centered on your available resources, the accessibility of your target market online, and your desired level of commitment. For example, updating your status on Facebook may take only a few minutes, whereas writing a blog involves a greater time commitment.

The schedule should indicate the number of times per week that you will update your social media accounts and at what time during the day you will update in order to make sure that your posts are viewed by the maximum number of people.

Please review the Sections: *Summary of Key Social Media Tools* and *How to Use Key Social Media Tools* in order to better understand the social media tools and the time involved in using these tools. This information will be useful in crafting a schedule and determining your social media marketing strategy.

Step 6 – Generate Ideas for Content

When using social media to market your enterprise, you want to publish content to the web that is interesting and engaging. Your posts, photos, and videos should draw people in and entice them to follow your enterprise online through the various social media tools. Therefore, what you talk about on social media websites is very important and should be carefully thought out before you begin updating your social media accounts. As a part of your social media strategy, you should have a clear idea of the message and image that you are trying to convey to your customers and design a plan for how you will do this.

Here are some ideas for content that you could include on your social media pages:

- Local news
- Current sustainability projects
- Interviews with staff and tour guides about their favorite things to do locally, what they enjoy about their job, etc.
- Local events
- Anecdotes from staff members about their experiences at the sustainable tourism enterprise
- Trivia
- Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
- Information about local culture, local animal life, and local plant life
- Videos of your enterprise and the amenities that you offer
- Photos of your enterprise, local attractions, etc.
- Customer comments and feedback

Step 7 - Monitor Results

As you begin to implement your social media strategy, it is crucial that you monitor and evaluate the results of your efforts according to the timelines and benchmarks established within your goals and objectives. Through an understanding of the outcomes of your social media strategy, you will be able to compare your aspirations to reality, identify areas for improvement, and make adjustments as needed. Depending on your experiences, you may find that you need to revise your social media strategy in order to achieve desired results.

You can refer to the *Monitoring and Evaluation* section later in this chapter for a more detailed discussion on how to establish metrics that can be used to evaluate your goals and objectives.

Step 8 – Manage Social Media Tools & Coordinate Your Online Activity

As you expand your online presence through social media, it is important that you establish a strategy for managing your social media accounts and coordinating your online activities. There are many tools available to help you with this process, including Hootsuite, Ping.fm, and Tweetdeck.

Hootsuite is a social media dashboard that allows you to manage multiple social networks and update them all at once. In the event that you have tasked multiple people with updating your enterprise's social media accounts, you can coordinate numerous account users. You can also view, print, and export metrics and statistics, schedule tweets, and create lists of followers on Twitter in order to further focus your content to specific users. The basic version of Hootsuite is free and allows you to add up to 5 social media accounts. Hootsuite also offers a pro version of its services at \$5.99/month, which provides users with unlimited social networks and unlimited statistics history. For more information or to set up an account, visit <http://hootsuite.com/>.

Ping.fm is another social media management tool. You can update Twitter, Facebook, WordPress, and other social media websites simultaneously. You can also integrate your Ping.fm account with Hootsuite and the site's services are free! For more information or to create an account, visit <http://ping.fm/>.

TweetDeck is a program that you can download to your desktop or smartphone, and it allows you to manage your Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, and other social media accounts from a single dashboard. TweetDeck enhances your Twitter experience by increasing ease of use. For more information or to download TweetDeck, visit <http://www.tweetdeck.com/>.

As you manage your social media accounts, these tools are helpful because:

- They streamline the process by allowing you to update content on multiple social media websites. You save time!
- They present little to no extra cost.
- Many of these tools can be accessed from a mobile device such as a smartphone.
- They help enterprises coordinate the activities of multiple social media account users.
- They allow you to organize those users who are following your enterprise.
- You can schedule updates.

Summary of Key Social Media Tools

While the Internet offers many opportunities to become engaged in social media, the following table describes the social media tools that we believe are most important to developing and executing a successful social media marketing campaign.

Key Social Media Tools	Description	Link to Website
	Facebook is a social networking website where individuals, businesses, and other organizations interact with one another. Facebook facilitates the development of connections and allows people to share ideas, experiences, photos, videos, and other media.	www.facebook.com
	Twitter is a micro-blogging site where people post short statements or questions called "tweets." Users are prompted to respond to the question "What's happening?" in 140 characters or less. You can follow other people and comment on posts.	http://twitter.com
	YouTube is a video sharing website where users can watch, post, and comment on videos. YouTube showcases both professionally developed and amateur videos, providing an outlet for those who generate their own original content as well as advertisers.	http://www.youtube.com
	Flickr is a photo sharing website where individuals and businesses can upload photos in order to organize them and share them with others. Sustainable tourism enterprises can post photos and tag them with keywords and a location in order to increase their visibility.	http://www.flickr.com/
	WordPress is a website that offers users free software for drafting and posting blogs. People write short, informal articles that are similar to diary or journal entries and then share them with others on the internet. Additional blogging and discussion forums will be discussed in a later section.	http://wordpress.com/
	Trip Advisor is a travel website through which people share knowledge about destinations, hotels, tour operators, and restaurants, write reviews, and offer advice. This community is a tool people use in order to obtain valuable information when planning their vacations.	http://www.tripadvisor.com/

Table 4: Summary of Key Social Media Tools

Tourism Tips! Social Media

Here are some general guidelines and tips that you should keep in mind, as you use social media tools and develop your own web content for your enterprise:



- An important aspect of using social media tools is listening.
 - This refers to making observations, seeing if you can establish trends, tracking the actions of members of your target market, and trying to understand how they interact and use various social media tools.
 - To listen, simply set up an account on the key social media websites and begin visiting and following pages that are relevant to your enterprise.
- Consistency is key.
 - It is essential that you are representing and portraying your enterprise consistently across social media forums.
 - Use the same company name, description, location, branding, etc. on all of your social media pages.
 - You can utilize the following websites in order to check the availability of usernames on various social media sites and reserve your username:
 - <http://namechk.com>
 - <http://checkusernames.com>
 - <http://knowem.com>
- Maintain a customer-centered approach.
 - One of the main purposes of social media is to build relationships, so you should work to actively interact with your customers.
 - Remember that the customer is the focal point of your interactions online.
 - Stick to the schedule that you establish for updating social media websites.
 - Implementing a social media strategy takes time, requiring dedication and persistence if you are to be successful.

Tips related to specific social media tools will be provided in the following sections.

2.4 Social Media - Facebook

This section will outline the key social media tools as identified in the Summary of Key Social Media Tools. It will provide reasons for using specific social media tools, a step-by-step guide for establishing your enterprise on social media sites, and general tips for using the various sites.



Facebook

Why Use Facebook?

As a social networking site, Facebook provides a great way for you to promote your sustainable tourism enterprise online and increase your web presence. Here are some reasons why you should use Facebook:

- Facebook is the most popular social networking site with more than 500 million users.
- People spend a significant amount of time on Facebook. 50% of users log into their Facebook account on the average day, and in total, Facebook users spend over 700 billion minutes per month on Facebook.
- Facebook provides a forum through which people interact, communicate, and get connected. The average Facebook user is linked to 80 community pages, groups, and events at any given time.
- People are increasingly accessing Facebook from their mobile devices. More than 200 million users log into their Facebook account using a mobile device.
- Facebook allows you to track the success and effectiveness of your online marketing efforts through Facebook Insights Analytics. This tool will be described in further detail in a later section.
- Facebook is integrated with other websites, increasing web exposure. Each month, more than 250 million people interact with Facebook on an external website.

Facebook Fan Page versus Facebook Profile or Group

When establishing your enterprise on Facebook, you will want to set up a Facebook Fan Page rather than a Facebook Profile or a Facebook Group. Generally, individual users make a Facebook Profile through which they communicate with personal contacts such as friends, family, and co-workers. An individual's Facebook profile is tied to his/her email address. Facebook Groups can be created by anyone with a Facebook account and are usually maintained by individuals with an affinity for a certain activity, cause, organization, or celebrity.

Facebook Fan Pages are designed specifically for use by businesses, bands, celebrities, and other organizations or personalities. Only an official representative of an organization can create a fan page. Considering this, a Facebook Fan Page is most appropriate and advantageous for use by a sustainable tourism enterprise. Fan pages allow for a higher level of interaction with your customers, and you have a greater ability to tailor the page in a way that best suits your enterprise and your goals than if you were to use a Facebook Group. Some benefits of Facebook Fan Pages include:

- Fan pages offer excellent word-of-mouth marketing. When Facebook users “like” your page, their friends will see that they have done so on their newsfeeds, raising awareness of your enterprise. Also, once a user has “liked” your page, posts that you make to your fan page will show up on his/her newsfeed. This function puts your updated content where your fans can easily see it and access it.
- Through your enterprise’s Facebook Fan Page, users can post to your wall, comment on photos and videos, “like” content you have posted, post their own pictures, and interact with you and other fans.
- On a Facebook Fan Page, you can use applications in order to generate interest and keep people engaged.
- Through your Facebook Fan Page, you can send messages directly to fans of your Facebook page much like an email.
- Fan pages permit you to have an unlimited number of fans whereas Facebook profiles have a friend limit of 5,000. Using a fan page, fan requests can be accepted automatically rather than manually.
- The tabs at the top of a Facebook Fan Page can be customized to suit your enterprise’s needs and direct your fans to specific content. For example, tabs can say “events,” “sustainable tourism information,” “local news,” etc.
- By using a Facebook Fan Page, you can obtain metrics regarding viewership through Facebook Insights Analytics.
- You have the option of paid advertisements which use collected data in order to target your ads to specific audiences.
- Overall, Facebook Fan Pages give you more latitude to implement your social media strategy in a way that is best for you.

Process: How to Set Up a Facebook Fan Page



Step 1 – Visit Facebook’s Website

- Go to www.facebook.com, and click on the link at the bottom of the page that reads “Create a Page for a celebrity, band or business.”

Step 2 – Fill out the Form

- Under the heading “Official Page,” fill out the fields in the form.
- Select “local business,” and then choose the description from the drop down menu that best applies to your enterprise.
- Type in your “Page Name.” This will most likely be the name of your enterprise.
- Check the box next to the statement “I’m the official representative of this person, business, band or product and have permission to create this page.”
- Click “Create Official Page.”
- When the disclaimer appears, click “create page.”

facebook

Email Password [Login](#)

☒ Keep me logged in [Forgot your password?](#)

Create a Page

Community Page

Generate support for your favorite cause or topic by creating a Community Page. If it becomes very popular (attracting thousands of fans), it will be adopted and maintained by the Facebook community. [Learn more.](#)

Page name:

(examples: Elect Jane Smith, Recycling)

[Create Community Page](#)

Official Page

Communicate with your customers and fans by creating and maintaining an official Facebook Page.

Create a Page for a:

☐ Local business

☐ Brand, product, or organization

☐ Artist, band, or public figure

Page name:

(examples: Summer Sky Cafe, Springfield Jazz Trio)

☐ I'm the official representative of this person, business, band or product and have permission to create this Page. [Review the Facebook Terms](#)

[Create Official Page](#)

Figure 15: Facebook Create a Page Webpage

Step 3 – Create a Facebook Account If You Do Not Already Have One

- If your fan page administrator already has a Facebook account, select “I already have a Facebook account,” and enter the appropriate email address and password.
- If your fan page administrator does not have a Facebook account, select “I do not have a Facebook account,” and fill in the information required to create an account. This includes an email address, date of birth, and password.
- Please note that the individual identity of your fan page administrator will in no way be associated with your enterprise’s fan page. A Facebook account is simply needed in order to create a Facebook Fan Page. If you would like more than one person to have access to your fan page for the purposes of posting and updating, then you can add multiple page administrators once you have created the page. This will be discussed in further detail later.

Step 4: Begin Customizing Your Fan Page

- Once you have created your fan page, you will be able to begin adding content, uploading pictures, recruiting fans, and customizing your fan page to suit your enterprise.
- When you first create your fan page, Facebook will offer guidance regarding how to get started with your new page. This is a great place to begin!
- Some important things to do when you initially create your fan page include:
 - Upload an image that will act as a profile picture for your fan page. This picture will go where the “?” currently is and will be associated with your fan page throughout the Facebook network. Consider uploading your logo, a picture of your enterprise, or an image of your destination.
 - Enter text in the box beneath the image. This text box is one of the first things that users will see when they visit your fan page. Often, businesses will write a short

description of the fan page and its purpose, provide links to their website and other social media pages, or welcome users to their fan page.

- Under the “info” tab, fill in your enterprise’s information by clicking “edit information.” Fill in the information as completely as possible as it pertains to your enterprise, and be sure that this information is consistent with what you have provided on your website and other social media websites.
- Begin to build your fan base. You want people to “like” your page and thus become a fan so that they begin to follow you. Facebook provides numerous suggestions regarding how to obtain fans, and this topic will be discussed further in the following section.

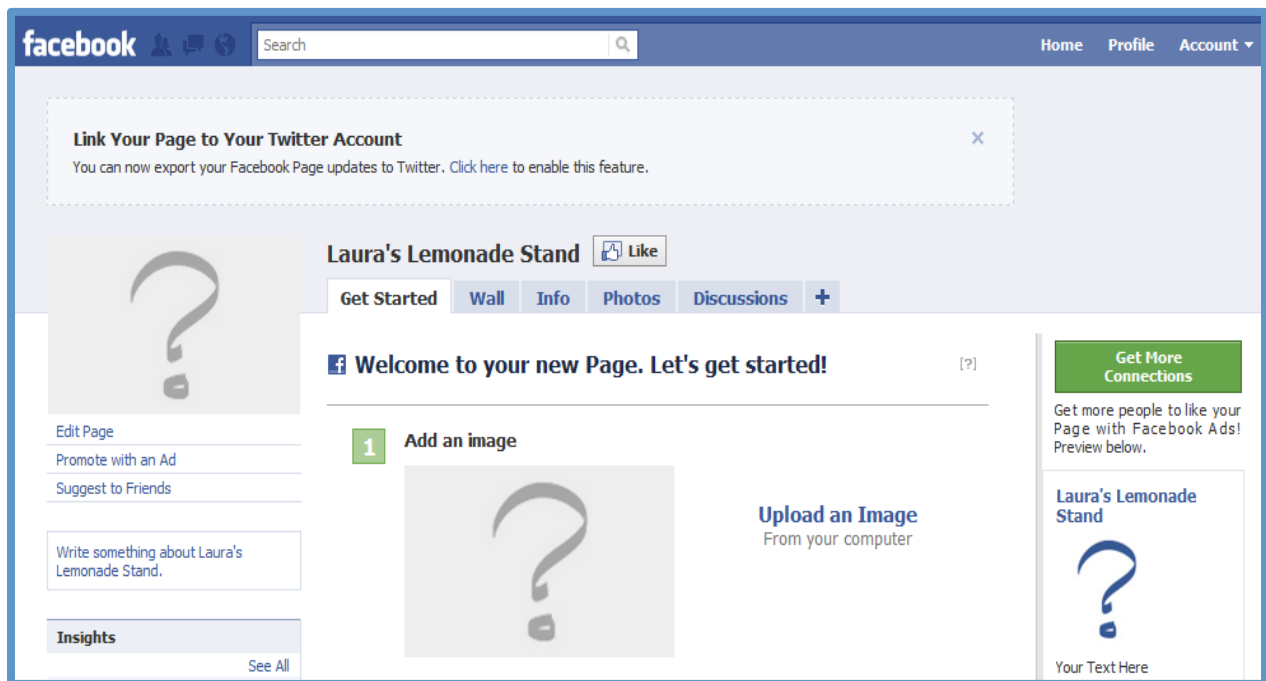


Figure 16: Customizing a Facebook Fan Page

Process: Establishing Your Fan Base

After you have created your Facebook Fan Page and developed targeted content, it is important that you begin building your fan base. When people “like” your page, they can follow your enterprise, view new content, interact with you and other fans, and spread the word about your enterprise. Here are some steps that you can take in order to increase your fan base:



Step 1 – Utilize personal connections that you have made through your personal Facebook account

- When you first create a fan page for your enterprise, use your personal Facebook account to recruit fans. Facebook will prompt you to “invite your friends,” and this function allows you to suggest that your friends become fans of the enterprise’s page. Other employees with a Facebook account can do the same thing in order to reach a greater number of people.
- As your Facebook friends begin to “like” your enterprise’s page, this action will show up in their friends’ newsfeeds and begin to raise awareness of your enterprise. Hopefully, their friends with similar interests will be prompted to “like” your page as well which will in turn be published to their friends’ newsfeeds, initiating a chain reaction.

Step 2 – Direct people to your Facebook Fan Page through your website and other social media pages

Content Suggestion	Example (from www.facebook.com)
Create a Facebook event for local happenings. These events could be occurring at your enterprise or within the local community.	Tourism Ireland created an event for St. Patrick's Day celebrations in Dublin, Ireland.
Post a special offer or promotion. These should be exclusive to your social media sites.	Visit Florida is holding a sweepstakes in which fans can enter to win a trip to Jacksonville, Florida and a new car.
Hold a contest.	Princess Cruises is promoting a contest called "What's on Your Travel Bucket List?" in which participants could win a vacation by sharing their most memorable travel experience.
Pose an open-ended question.	100% Pure New Zealand asked fans "New York Yankee Curtis Granderson has arrived in New Zealand. What's the one thing he shouldn't miss experiencing here?"
Ask fans to fill-in-the-blank.	Trip Advisor posted "My best travel memory of 2010 was _____ (fill in the blank!)."
Request that users post a photo to your page.	The Travel Club offered fans a chance to win a suitcase if they posted a photo from the Sinulog Festival in the Philippines to the fan page wall.
Offer trivia.	Jordan Travel and Tourism Guide informed fans that "Mansaf is a Jordanian dish made of lamb cooked in a sauce of fermented dried yogurt and served with rice or groats. It is the national dish of Jordan."
Direct people to your website and other social media sites such as your blog, your Twitter account, or your Flickr albums.	The Bahamas prompts users to visit its official webpage in the text book on its fan page.
Take a poll.	Travel Channel created a separate tab for a poll asking "Which Travel Channel show inspires you the most?"
Share articles and videos that others have created but that are also relevant to your enterprise.	Belize Tourism Industry Association posted a link to an article on a couple that relocated to Belize, promoting "Belize as a retirement location!"
Generate a theme for your status updates.	Travel Wisconsin has Tuesday Trivia, posting trivia questions for fans every Tuesday.
Post sample itineraries for your destination.	Vietnam Travel Plan posts links to itineraries for vacations in Vietnam.
Customize the tabs on your Facebook page to include a section of "Things to Do" or "Places to See" at your destination. Maybe include a "Bookings" tab, which directs people as to how to make a reservation at your sustainable tourism enterprise.	I Love New York has a customized tab labeled "Travel Guide" which includes resources for planning your trip to New York.

Inform fans of related causes.	United States Virgin Islands urges fans to the Virgin Island Haiti Relief Fund under the organization's information.
Provide links to partners' Facebook pages or websites such as a local tourism association.	Cayman Islands Tourism Association posted a link to the website for Taste of Cayman Food & Wine Festival.
Tag fans in notes and statuses.	Kansas Travel and Tourism tagged the Historic Anthony Theatre and the Anthony Chamber of Commerce in status updates about the town.
Create photo albums that showcase your destination and your enterprise.	Wyndham Nassau Resort & Crystal Palace Casino has made albums depicting its rooms, restaurants, hotel grounds, and other amenities and attractions.
Inform fans about local artists, musicians, writers, news, etc.	Totally Spain Travel & Tourism notified fans that "Valencia is now linked to Madrid by the high speed AVE train. Journey time is only 98 minutes."
Update fans with local news.	Queensland, Australia urged fans to spread the word that the majority of tourist attractions in Queensland were not affected by the recent flooding.
Share interesting and informative anecdotes and funny stories about what is happening at your enterprise or your destination.	Alaska Wilderness Recreation and Tourism Association warned travelers about coming into contact with bears in the wild and directed users to an article about some mountain bikers' recent encounter while offering advice on how to stay safe.
Write a note in order to inform your fans of specific events, promotions, and news.	Dandenong Ranges Tourism wrote a note that included a calendar of events for the month of January.

Table 5: Ways to Create Linkages to a Facebook Page

- Prompt people to visit your fan page by providing the link on your website and other social media accounts or by adding a “Facebook Like Box” to your site. A “Facebook Like Box” is a social plugin that appears on your website, prompting people to find you on Facebook, and allows those who visit your site to easily follow you Facebook Fan Page by clicking “like.”
- From your fan page, click “edit page,” then select “marketing,” and choose “add a like box to your website.” Follow the instructions provided by Facebook in order to obtain the appropriate code for your website.

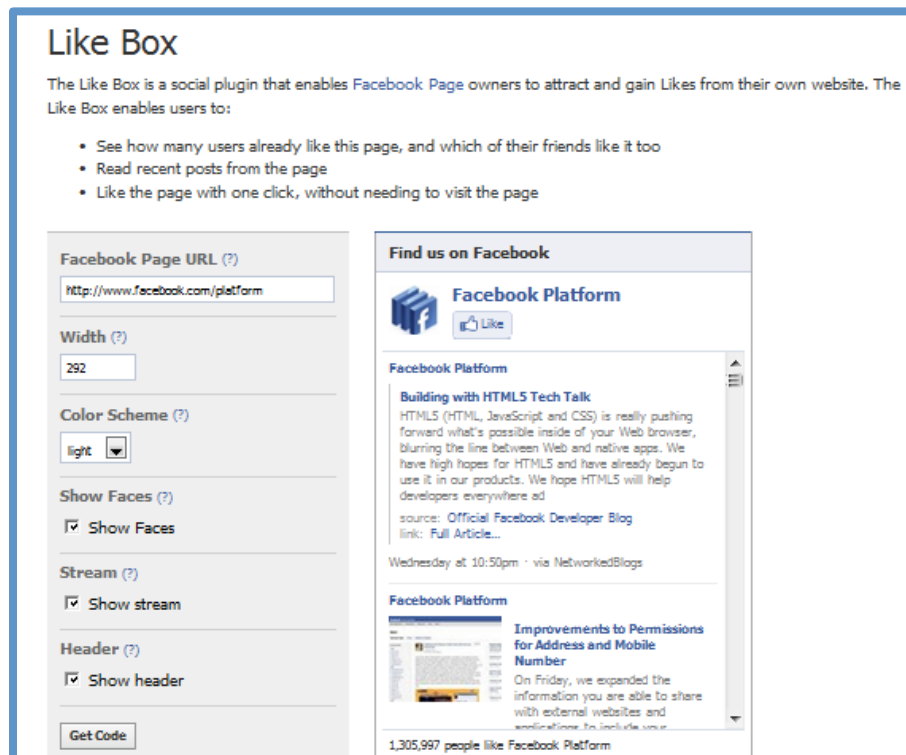


Figure 17: Facebook Like Box

Step 3 – Update your page with quality content

- In many cases, people will be prompted to “like” your page because you offer them something of value such as interesting and informative content, helpful discussions, or attractive photos and videos. For this reason, be sure to update your fan page regularly with quality content.
- All content should be geared toward your target audience and coincide with your overall marketing strategy. Your posts should generate interest and engage your audience.
- Be personable and encourage your fans to interact with you by commenting, posting photos, and engaging in discussion.
- Some content suggestions for your Facebook Fan Page include:

Step 4 – Use paid advertisements on Facebook

If you have the resources available in your marketing budget, you may want to use Facebook Ads. Facebook Ads promote your enterprise to targeted users, appearing on the right hand side of the webpage as users navigate throughout Facebook. Advertisements are viewed on home pages, profiles,

groups, fan pages, and applications. Since Facebook acquires so much information on all of its users and their networks, ads can be targeted to specific audiences based on location, gender, age, keywords, language, occupation, place of employment, college, and other affiliations.

There is no set cost for a Facebook ad. Instead, you bid on advertisements per click or thousand impressions. Cost per click (CPC) is the amount that you will pay to Facebook each time a user clicks on your ad. Cost per thousand impressions is the amount that you will pay to Facebook per thousand times that a user views your ad. When you bid on a Facebook ad, you are competing with those who want similar ad space and are targeting a comparable audience. Also, Facebook monitors advertisements' performance against each other, and these comparisons influence which bids it chooses to accept. As you fill out the form to generate your Facebook ad, Facebook will recommend what you should bid based upon the targeting criteria you have entered.

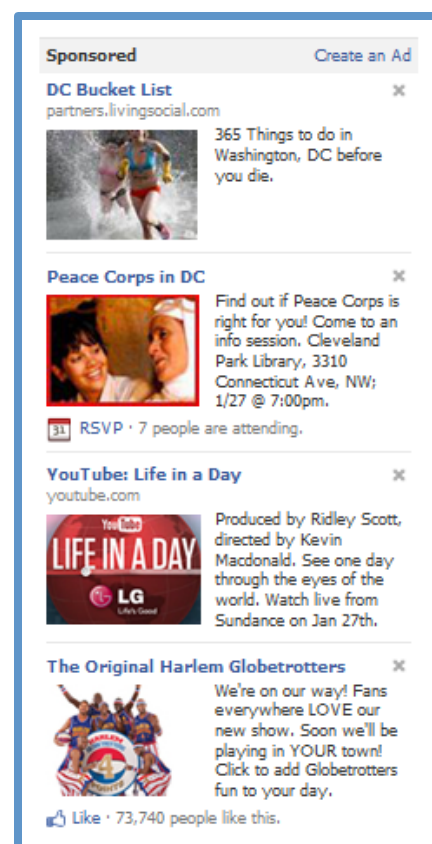


Figure 18: Facebook Ads

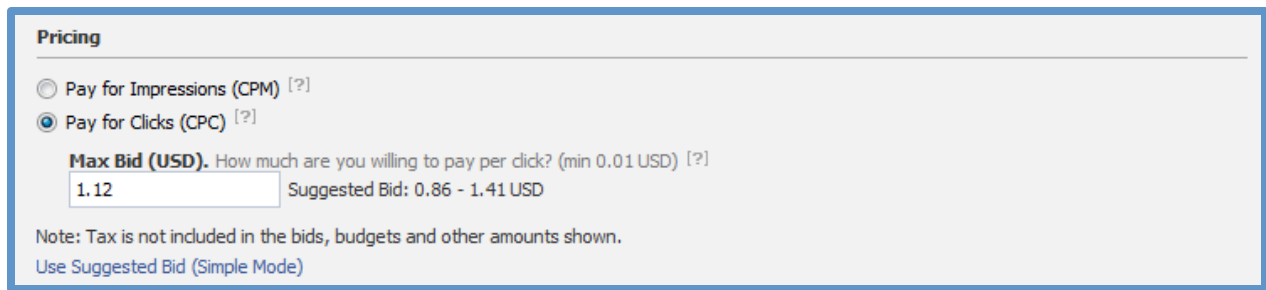
Pricing

Based on your targeting options, Facebook suggests a bid of **\$1.09** per click. You may pay up to this much per click, but you will likely pay less.
 Note: Tax is not included in the bids, budgets and other amounts shown.

[Set a Different Bid \(Advanced Mode\)](#)

Figure 19: Facebook Ad Pricing

Also, you can utilize the bid estimator function as you create your Facebook ad in order to view what people are currently paying for ads similar to yours in the advertisement auction. This tool allows you to get a better idea of how much your ads will cost as well as how much you should bid to win advertising space. To look at the bid estimator, you must simply fill out the Advertise on Facebook form completely and click “Set a different bid (advanced mode)” under the Pricing heading. Pricing for Facebook ads varies based on your target audience as well as who else is bidding for the same advertising space.



Pricing

☐ Pay for Impressions (CPM) [?]

☒ Pay for Clicks (CPC) [?]

Max Bid (USD). How much are you willing to pay per click? (min 0.01 USD) [?]

1.12 Suggested Bid: 0.86 - 1.41 USD

Note: Tax is not included in the bids, budgets and other amounts shown.

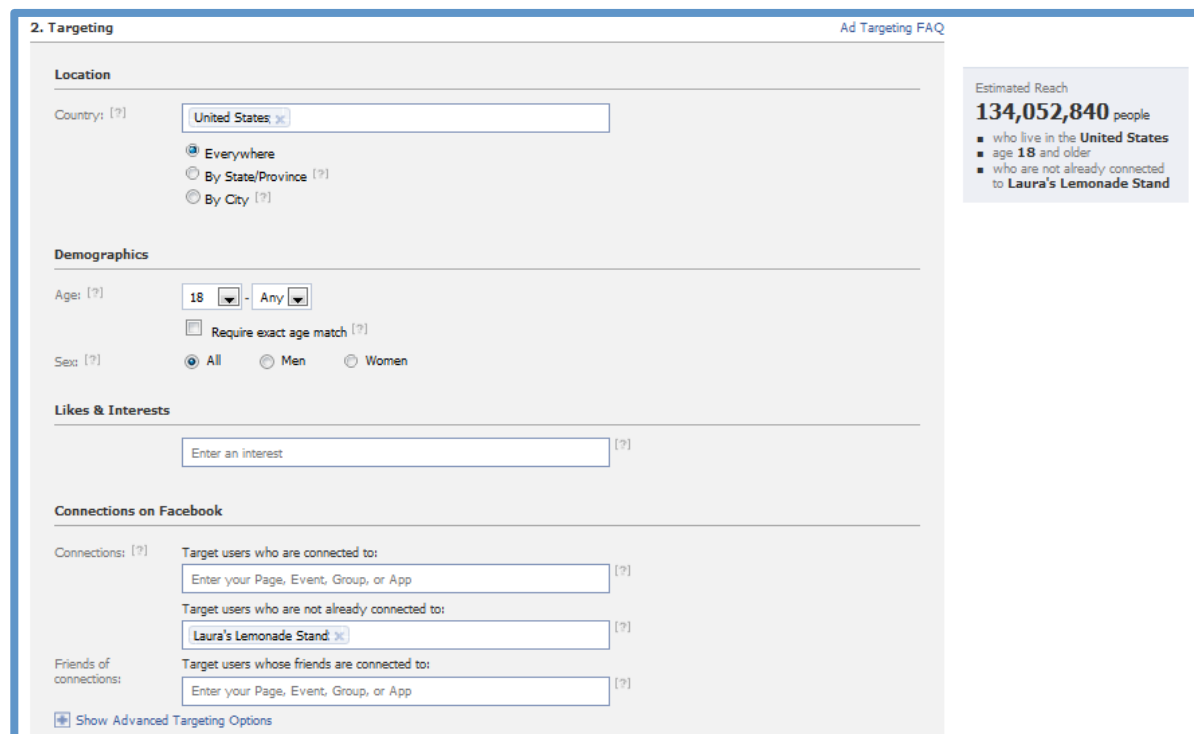
[Use Suggested Bid \(Simple Mode\)](#)

Figure 20: Facebook Ad Pricing

Often, Facebook ads are very cost effective in attracting new users to your Facebook Fan Page, since you can choose to pay per click. In this case, you only pay for the advertisement when someone clicks on it. Also, Facebook allows you to set a daily spending limit so that you remain within your budget.

To create a Facebook paid advertisement, follow these steps.

- Click “edit page” under the image on your fan page, then “marketing,” and finally “advertise on Facebook.” This action will begin the process through which you create and bid for your advertisement.
- You will be prompted to design your ad using text and an image.
- Next, you will enter your targeting criteria, describing who you are trying to reach with your advertisement.
- Under the section “Campaigns, Pricing and Scheduling,” enter information about your budget, your bid for the advertisement, and the schedule on which you would like the ad to run.
- Proceed by clicking “review ad” at the bottom of the page, verify the information that you have entered, and then choose “place order.”



2. Targeting Ad Targeting FAQ

Location

Country: [?]

☒ Everywhere

☐ By State/Province [?]

☐ By City [?]

Demographics

Age: [?] -

☐ Require exact age match [?]

Sex: [?] ☒ All ☐ Men ☐ Women

Likes & Interests

[?]

Connections on Facebook

Connections: [?] Target users who are connected to:

[?]

Target users who are not already connected to:

[?]

Friends of connections:

Target users whose friends are connected to:

[?]

☒ Show Advanced Targeting Options

Estimated Reach

134,052,840 people

- who live in the **United States**
- age **18** and older
- who are not already connected to **Laura's Lemonade Stand**

Figure 21: Facebook Paid Ad Page

Tourism Tips! Using Facebook Paid Advertisements:

- Track the results of your advertising efforts. Facebook allows you to generate reports and monitor metrics in order to determine how many users are directed to your fan page through your advertisement as well as how many new users “like” your page.
- Experiment with which targeting criteria attracts the most users.
- Do not use Facebook ads to sell directly to your customers. Instead, persuade them to visit your Facebook page and become a fan so as to begin building a relationship with users.
- Outline clear targeting criteria so your ads reach your target market.



Step 5 – Network

Facebook is all about establishing connections and interacting with other people, so use your existing contacts to obtain new fans. Encourage your fans to tell their friends about your enterprise. Write on the wall of other fan pages that are related to your enterprise in order to direct people to your fan page. When doing this, be careful that your post does not come across as spam, as this will deter people from visiting your page. Do **not** post advertisements, or urge people to “book now.” Instead, add value through your post by showing your support for a cause or enthusiasm for a destination, offering helpful and interesting information, and enhancing users’ experiences.

Similarly, tag other pages, people, or organizations that you have “liked” in your status updates by typing @ followed by the name of their Facebook page. As you type, a drop down menu will appear where you can select the name of the page. Your status update will then appear on the page of whomever you have tagged, increasing your exposure and influencing other to click through to your page. Also, encourage your fans to tell their friends about your enterprise.

For example, the Adelaide Sunday Mail, a print publication, tagged a fan page promoting flood relief in Queensland, Australia in one of its status updates in order to encourage people to support the cause and to direct them to an online article that the publication had produced about the floods. This status update appeared on the Adelaide Sunday Mail fan page as well as the Queensland Floods fan page.



Figure 22: Sample Tag

Process: Editing & Updating Your Fan Page



Once you have gotten started with your Facebook Fan Page, you are ready to actively engage Facebook users by editing and updating your fan page. Below are some steps that you can take in order

to maintain quality content and increase user interest in your fan page. Please note that these steps should be taken on a continual basis, so your fan page remains up to date, and people continue to show interest.

Step 1 – Edit Your Page’s Information

- Click “edit page” under the image on your fan page.
- From here, you can update your enterprise’s Basic Information, upload a new profile picture, manage page administrators, access applications, and view Facebook Insights.
- In the event that you would like multiple people to have access to your fan page through their Facebook accounts, you may add additional page administrators by selecting “manage admins” and entering their name or email address.
- Save any changes.

Step 2 – Post Status Updates

- Let people know what your enterprise is doing, ask for their opinions, deliver local news and prompt users to action by posting a status update to your wall.
- Status updates are published to your fans’ news feeds.

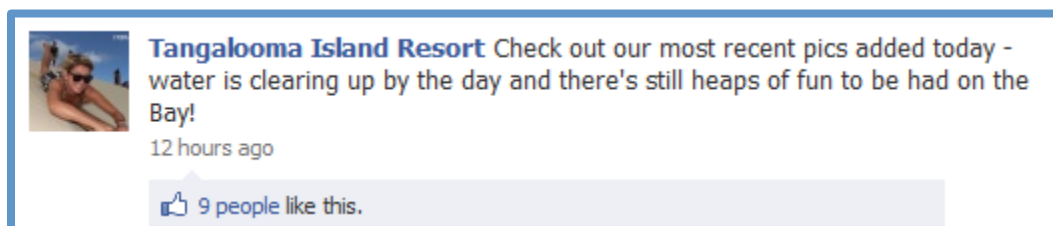


Figure 23: Facebook Post Example

Step 3 – Upload Photos to an Album

- Create a photo album on your fan page by clicking the “Photos” tab and selecting “Create a Photo Album.”
- You will be prompted to select photos to upload from your computer and name your photo album.
- When you create a photo album, this action will be published to fans’ newsfeeds, and they will be able to comment on the album and individual photos.

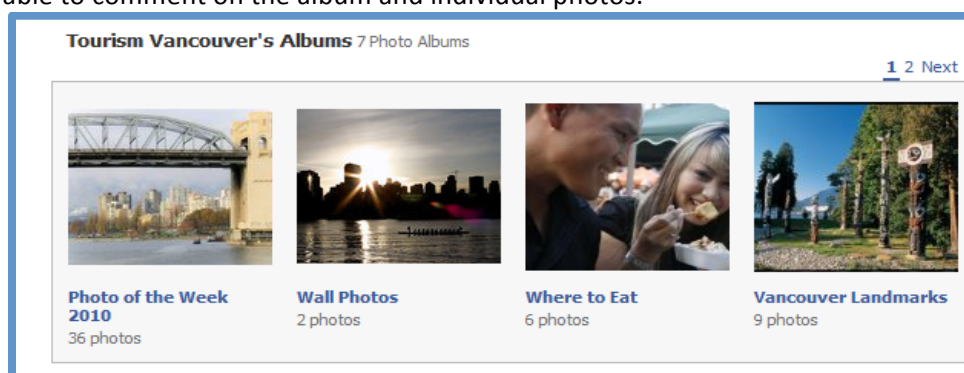


Figure 24: Facebook Photo Upload

Step 4 – Post a Photo, Video, or Link to Your Wall

- Similarly to updating your status, post a specific photo, video, or link that you would like your fans to see to your wall by clicking on the tab that says “wall” and then choosing the type of media that you would like to post.
- These updates are published to your fans’ newsfeeds and are easily viewed when users visit your fan page, as your wall is generally the first thing that people will see.



Figure 25: Facebook Post Example

Step 5 – Adjust Your Page’s Settings

- When you create your fan page, Facebook utilizes default settings for your page; however, you can change these settings and customize them to your enterprise’s specific needs and goals.
- Click “edit page,” and select “manage permissions.”
- You can control who can see your fan page and who can post to your fan page. You can choose if you would like fans to be able to post pictures, videos, and wall posts or if you would like to leave this function to page administrators. Keep in mind that allowing users to post on your fan page increases interaction and helps to keep people engaged.

Step 6 – Create Events

- You can create a Facebook event for an occurrence at your enterprise or destination by clicking the plus (+) symbol in the tab menu at the top of your fan page and choosing “Events.”
- Once you have added this tab, you select “create event” in order to generate a description of the event and invite fans to participate.



Figure 26: Facebook Event Example

Step 7- Use Other Applications

- Facebook has a number of different applications that you can use in order to enhance people's experiences on your fan page. Applications are
- To add more applications to your fan page, click "edit page," choose "apps," and then scroll to the bottom of the page and select "browse more applications."
- Search through the various applications. Click on the application and then "add to my page" to place the application to your fan page.
- For example, you can add a Reviews application where fans can write reviews of your enterprise to which you can respond.

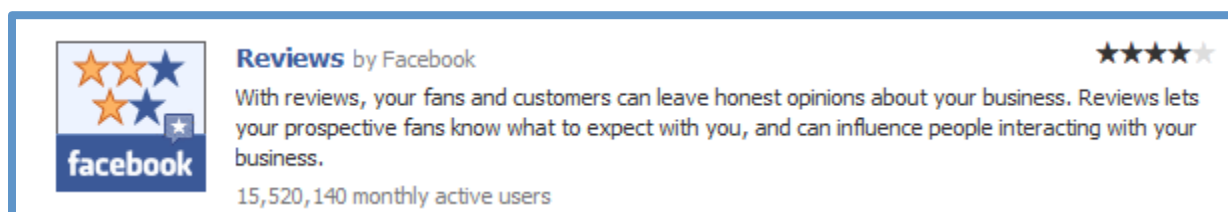


Figure 27: Facebook Applications Example

- You can also manage settings for your photos, events, videos, links, discussion boards, and other authorized applications by clicking on "edit page," "apps," and "edit settings" under the desired application.

Tourism Tips! Using Facebook

The following are some general tips for using Facebook successfully in order to promote your enterprise:

- When you begin posting and updating content, experiment with what time of day provides the most responses. Because the Internet is so fast moving, and people often have a lot of information on their newsfeeds, users are most likely to see the pages that have been updated most recently when they log onto Facebook. You want to post to your fan page at a time when as large of a portion of your audience as possible will see the updates.



- On Facebook, a user's newsfeed is very important to successful word-of-mouth marketing. You do not want people to hide updates that you make to your fan page from their newsfeed because they will not see new content or be prompted to visit your page. Therefore, keep your postings exciting and informative.
- Utilize Facebook's "Help" section if you are having any difficulty with your fan page. Facebook offers great support to users, and there are discussion boards where you can reach out to other users for their advice as well.
- Direct as many people to your Facebook fan page as possible. Add your fan page's web address to your email signature so that your email contacts are prompted to visit your Facebook page when they receive an email from you. Also, link your Facebook page to your other social media pages and your website in order to increase traffic.

2.5 Social Media - Twitter



Why Use Twitter?

Arguably, Twitter is the Internet's most popular micro-blogging website, allowing you to communicate with your customers in an informal and casual forum. Through Twitter, you can share information and interact with others, as Twitter users follow your account, and then, your tweets appear in their timeline, a feature that is similar to the newsfeed on Facebook. In Twitter lingo, a tweet is the short message that you post on Twitter, and to tweet is the act of posting a message on your Twitter page.

The following are reasons why your enterprise should use Twitter:

- The number of Twitter users has reached 175,000,000.
- 370,000 new users set up a Twitter account each day.
- 180 million unique visitors go to Twitter's website every month.
- Twitter is used for micro-blogging, which consists of a short statement, question, or comment, so posting individual tweets does not take very much time.
- Twitter allows you to communicate with your customers in real time, making you highly accessible to them.
- Twitter is commonly accessed from mobile devices.
- Twitter's informality helps you to build relationships with customers.

Process: How to Set Up a Twitter Account

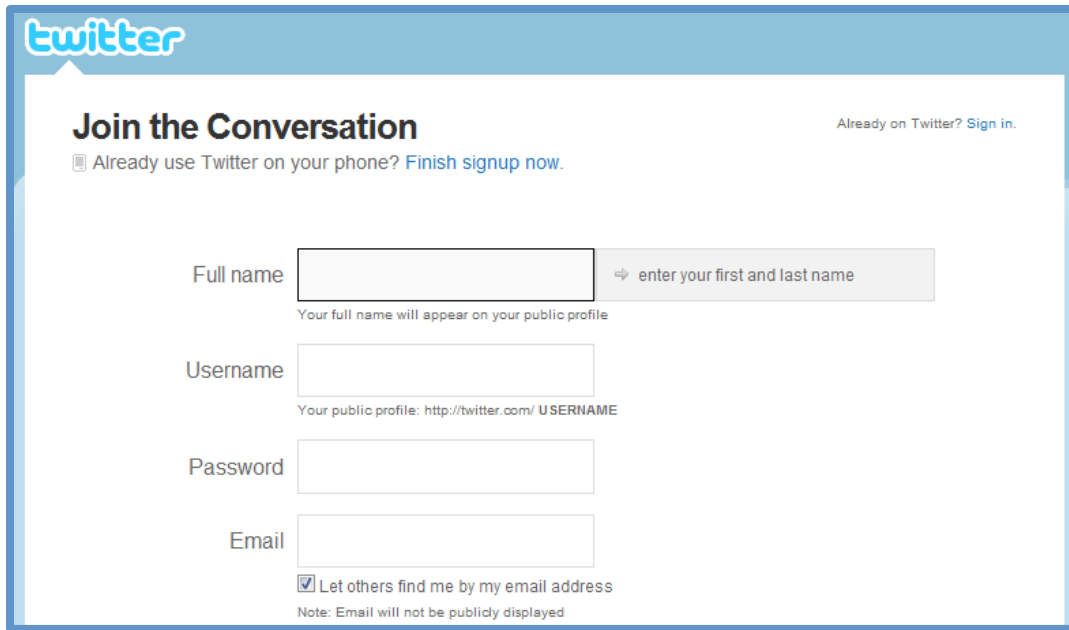


Step 1 – Visit Twitter's website

- Go to www.twitter.com, and click on the link on the side of the page that says "sign up."

Step 2 – Fill in the Sign up Form

- Complete all of the fields on the sign up form.
- Use the name of your enterprise as the full name, as this information will appear on your Twitter page and profile.
- Utilize the email address of the person who will be maintaining your enterprise's Twitter account and representing your enterprise on Twitter.
- Use a username that is identifiable with your enterprise, preferably the name of your enterprise. If possible, it is beneficial to use the same username across social media accounts, so utilize the title of your Facebook Fan Page for your Twitter account. Your username is what people will see at the top of your Twitter page.
- When you are finished filling in the form, click "create my account."



Join the Conversation Already on Twitter? [Sign in.](#)

☐ Already use Twitter on your phone? [Finish signup now.](#)

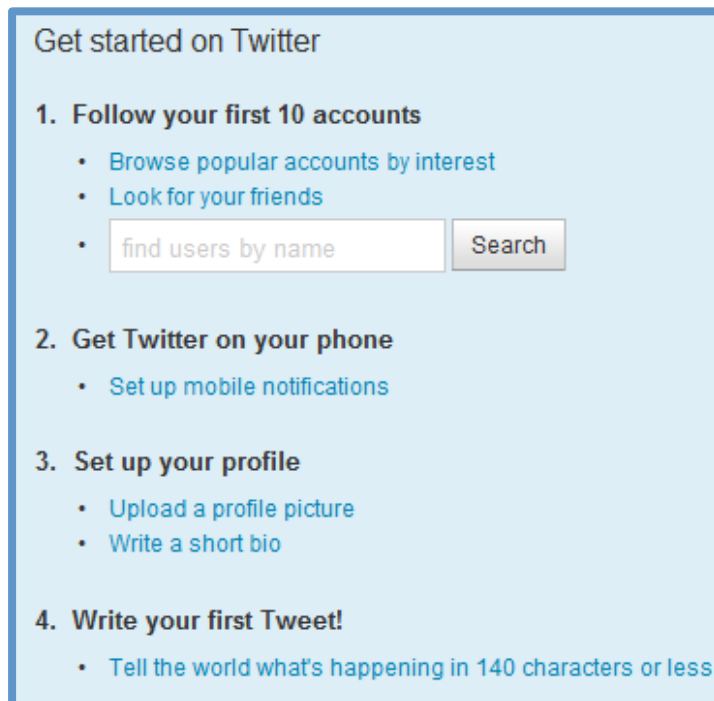
Full name enter your first and last name
Your full name will appear on your public profile

Username
Your public profile: <http://twitter.com/> USERNAME

Password

Email
☒ Let others find me by my email address
Note: Email will not be publicly displayed

Figure 28: Twitter Sign Up Page

Process: Getting Started with Twitter


Get started on Twitter

- 1. Follow your first 10 accounts**
 - [Browse popular accounts by interest](#)
 - [Look for your friends](#)
 - find users by name
- 2. Get Twitter on your phone**
 - [Set up mobile notifications](#)
- 3. Set up your profile**
 - [Upload a profile picture](#)
 - [Write a short bio](#)
- 4. Write your first Tweet!**
 - [Tell the world what's happening in 140 characters or less](#)

Figure 29: Twitter Getting Started

Step 1 – Update Your Profile

There is a profile associated with your Twitter account, so update this information with an image and current biographical information that is 160 characters or less. You want your Twitter page to be accurate and complete when people begin viewing it. To update your profile:

- Choose “profile” from the menu at the top of the page, and “edit your profile.” You can make pages to your profile from this page.
- In the bio, indicate that your account is the official Twitter page for your enterprise as well as the purpose of your Twitter page.



Figure 30: Twitter Profile

Step 2 – Find People, Businesses, and Other Organizations to Follow

- Find other enterprises that are similar to your enterprise or are located at your tourist destination, and begin to follow them on Twitter. This will help you to build your network, gain exposure, see the type of content that other enterprises are posting on Twitter, and learn what your customers are interested in talking about.
- “Listening” when you first join Twitter will also help you to find your target audience, and see who your current and potential customers are following.

Step 3 – Start Writing Tweets

Once you have become familiar with Twitter, begin to write your own tweets for your enterprise. Suggestions for content of tweets include:

- Travel suggestions and tips specific to your destination
- Vacation ideas
- Unique events occurring at your enterprise or destination
- Trivia
- Local knowledge
- Local news
- Weather
- A “behind the scenes” look at your enterprise
- Special offers and promotions
- Questions for your followers
- A link to an article, video, or photo

Make tweeting a fun, interesting, and engaging experience for your followers.

- To get the most out of your interactions with people and organizations on Twitter, mention other users in your tweets by typing @ and then their Twitter username. They will receive a notification that you have tagged them in a tweet.

- For example, if someone writes a tweet about the excellent experience they had at your enterprise, show your appreciation by saying “thank you, @_____! We are so glad that you had a great time at our destination. It was lovely having you! Come visit us again soon!”
- This action helps you to solidify your relationships with your customers and confirms how much you value their business.

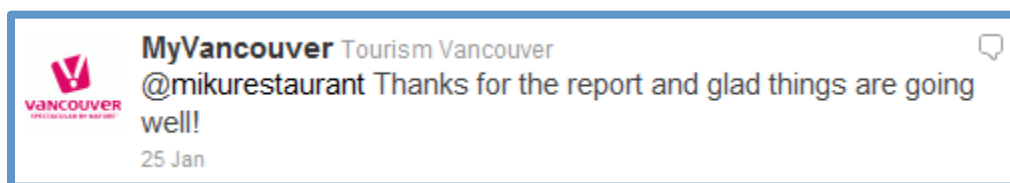


Figure 31: Twitter Response

- Demonstrate that you like other people’s tweets and appreciate their efforts by retweeting. This function allows you to share other people’s tweets with your followers, bringing further attention to an interesting and informative tweet.
 - To retweet, click “retweet” below the tweet that you would like to forward.
 - “RT” indicates a retweet.

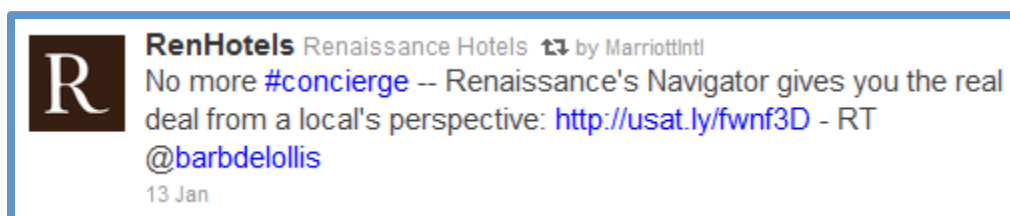


Figure 32: Twitter "Retweet"

- Send a direct message to one of your followers by clicking on “messages,” entering their Twitter username and a message, and then choosing “send.”
 - This feature allows you to communicate with specific users directly, and send tweets that are visible only to them.
 - You can send a message to anyone that follows you on Twitter, and your message is still limited to 140 characters.
- Indicate keywords or themes in your tweets by using the hash tag. Enter # followed by the keyword.
 - This categorizes your tweet. When people search for the keyword on Twitter, your tweet will appear in the results.
 - People can also click on the keyword to view other tweets with a similar theme.

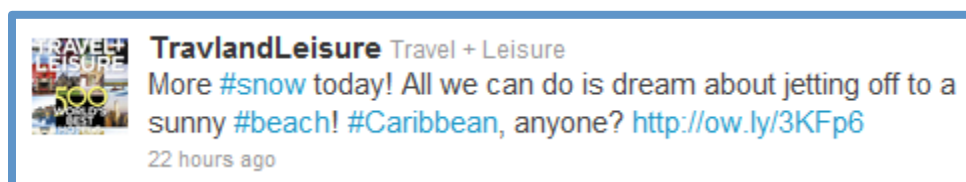


Figure 33: Twitter Hash Tag Use Example



Tourism Tips! Using Twitter

- Twitter provides a very fast paced environment for networking and information sharing, so keep your Twitter page up-to-date, and tweet often. People are always looking for the latest information.
- Be responsive to your followers. Remember that Twitter like all other social media is a dialogue between you and your followers, so be sure that you are actively taking part in the conversation.
- Use a consistent voice and tone across social media forums. Portray your enterprise and your message to your customers in the same manner on Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, and your blog.
- You can change the settings on your Twitter account by clicking on the drop down arrow next to your username in the upper right hand corner of your Twitter page and then selecting “settings.” Adjust privacy, notification, and other settings to reflect your preferences.
- If you are having trouble with your Twitter account or need further directions, visit Twitter’s help page at <http://support.twitter.com>. Information specific to Twitter for Business can be found at <http://business.twitter.com/>.

2.6 Social Media - YouTube

Why Use YouTube?

As the largest video sharing community in the world, YouTube attracts many people to its website and provides a forum in which people can share videos, view videos, and interact with one another. Here are some reasons why you should use YouTube to market your sustainable tourism enterprise:



- A lot of people visit YouTube's website. Each day, people watch approximately 2 billion YouTube videos.
- YouTube reaches a wide audience. The age of users ranges from 18-55. 51% of users visit YouTube at least one a week, and 52% of 18-34 year olds share videos with others who are online.
- YouTube is an audiovisual outlet (as opposed to other forms of social media). You can upload unique and engaging content which people can then comment on and share with others.

Process: How to Set Up a YouTube Account



Step 1 – Visit YouTube’s Website

- Go to www.youtube.com, and click on the link in the top right hand corner of the webpage that says “create account.”

Step 2 – Fill in the Sign-Up Form

- Complete all of the fields on the sign up form.
- Utilize the email address of the person who will be maintaining your enterprise’s YouTube account and representing your enterprise on YouTube.
- Use a username that is identifiable with your enterprise, preferably the name of your enterprise. If possible, it is beneficial to use the same username across social media accounts, so utilize the same username that you chose for your Twitter page. Your username is what people will see at the top of your YouTube channel, and it will be associated with any videos that you post and any comments that you make on other videos.
- Accept the Terms of Agreement and you’re all set up with your account!

Figure 34: YouTube Account Set Up

Process: Getting Started With YouTube



Step 1 – Format Your YouTube Channel

A YouTube Channel is a collection of videos that reflect a specific user's tastes and preferences. Your YouTube channel is also the home page for your account. It includes videos that you have uploaded, videos that you marked as favorites, playlists that you have created, and your profile information, allowing you to share your activities on YouTube with others. Besides being able to easily access videos that are relevant and important to your enterprise or destination, people can see comments you have left on videos, other channels that you have subscribed to, and videos that you have liked.

Depending on your goals and objectives, your YouTube channel may include videos that you have created giving a virtual tour of your enterprise, informative videos on a destination's attractions, or videos on local culture. Take advantage of other people's content as well as your own in order to provide users with an understanding and appreciation of your destination. In this way, YouTube channels make the task of finding information easy for users by grouping and categorizing videos. When users subscribe to your YouTube channel, they can easily access your content, view updates, and interact with your enterprise directly.

Your YouTube channel is automatically created when you set up a YouTube account. It is given a unique URL so that you can direct people to your YouTube channel by providing the link on other websites and social media outlets.

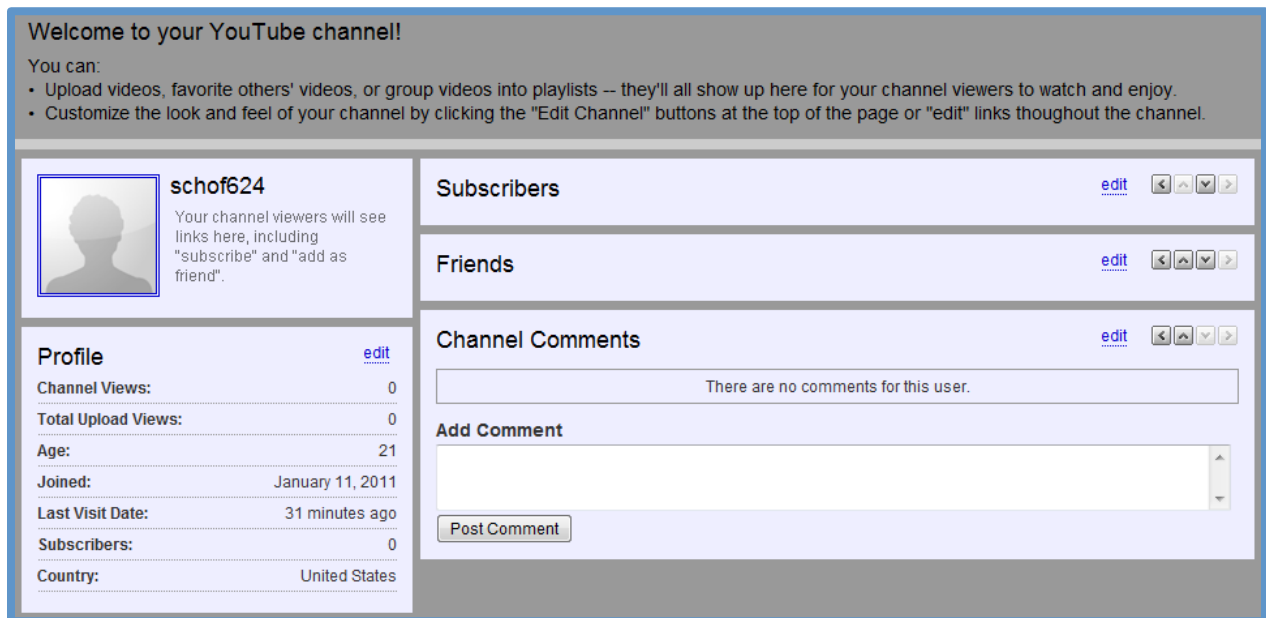


Figure 35: YouTube Channel

To navigate to your YouTube channel:

- Click the drop down arrow next to your username at the top right hand corner of the webpage, and select “my channel.”
- This action will bring you to your homepage where you can make any changes and updates to your YouTube channel.

To adjust the settings and appearance of your YouTube channel:

- Select the tab labeled “settings.”
- Enter a title for your YouTube channel such as the name of your enterprise.
- Enter channel tags which are keywords that are associated with your channel. People will then be able to find your channel through a keyword search.
- Next, go to the tab labeled “themes and colors” to choose the color scheme and background for your YouTube page.
- Under the “modules” tab, select what you would like your subscribers to be able to see on you YouTube channel page, as this can be tailored to your preferences. Check the box next to those modules that you would like to be visible.
- Finally, select “videos and playlists” in order to choose what media (favorites, uploaded videos, and playlists) that you would like users to be able to see on your YouTube channel.
- Always remember to click “save changes” when you have made an update that you would like to be saved.

Step 2 – Update Your Profile on Your YouTube Channel

Similar to the other social media tools discussed thus far, your YouTube channel allows users to view your profile. The information provided in your profile should be accurate, complete, and up-to-date. Any information provided should be consistent with you other social media accounts and your overall marketing strategy.

- From your YouTube channel homepage, click “edit” next to your profile.
- Fill in the relevant information (enterprise name, website, channel description, enterprise description).
- Click “save changes.”

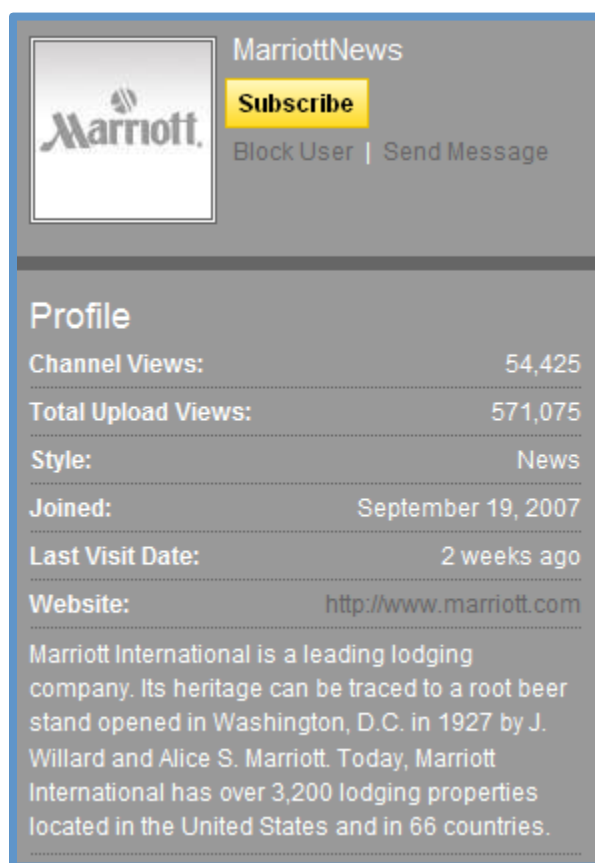


Figure 36: YouTube Channel Update

Step 3 – Favorite Videos & Subscribe to Other Channels

In order to build your network on YouTube and begin adding interesting and engaging content to your YouTube channel, search YouTube for videos and channels that are relevant to your destination, your enterprise, and sustainable tourism. Favorite videos and subscribe to channels that you think would enhance your customers’ experiences when they visit your YouTube channel, for these videos will appear on your YouTube channel.

- To favorite a video, click the drop down arrow next to “add to” under the video. Then, choose “favorites” or the name of the playlist to which you would like to add the video. The video will then appear on your YouTube channel where your subscribers will be prompted to view it.

- Click “subscribe” next to the name of the YouTube channel that you would like to subscribe to if you are on the channel’s home page.



Figure 37: YouTube Subscribe

Step 4 – Upload Video

Once you have become familiar with YouTube, you may choose to upload videos that you have created for viewing. To upload a video:

- Click “upload” next to the search bar.
- Select “upload video,” and then browse your computer for the video file, clicking “open” once you have selected it.
- The upload will begin, and you can view its progress that includes an estimate of how long it will take the video to upload.
- Enter a title for the video, a description of the video, and any tags (keywords) that will increase the likelihood that your video will appear in your target audience’s search results.
- Click “save changes.”

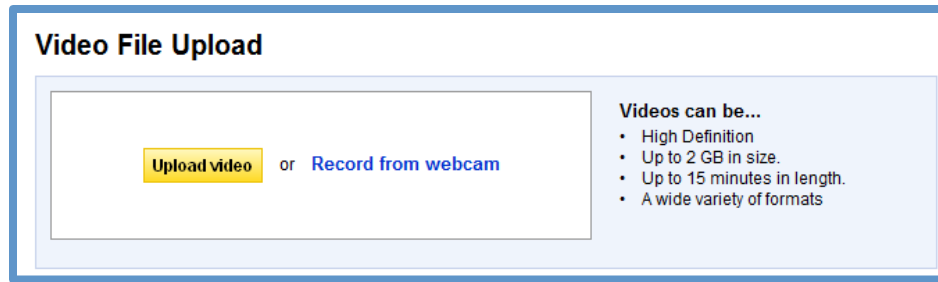


Figure 38: YouTube File Upload

Step 5 – Encourage People to Watch Your Videos and Subscribe to Your YouTube Channel

After identifying and creating quality content, you will want to attract users to your YouTube channel and encourage people to subscribe.

- Good content will help to draw in and maintain subscribers. Be active on your YouTube account, respond to user comments, and update your favorites and playlists often. This will keep people interested in your YouTube channel.
- Promote your YouTube channel on other social media accounts and your website so as to direct traffic to your YouTube channel.
- Utilize channel bulletins in order to communicate with your subscribers.
 - Send a bulletin, which is a message, from your YouTube channel homepage by clicking “post bulletin.”
 - The bulletin will appear on the homepage of those who subscribe to your YouTube channel as well as the recent activity section of your homepage.
 - Bulletins can include a link to a video, updates about a video you are currently working one, and notification of a new video that you have posted.
- If you have enough room in your marketing budget and have determined YouTube to be a key part of your social media marketing strategy, consider using YouTube’s paid promoted videos.
 - Through promoted videos, you can promote your YouTube channel on YouTube.
 - Your promotions will be viewed by users alongside search results when people are seeking related content.
 - Upload a video or choose a video that you have already uploaded to be used as your promotional video. Add promotional text as well as tags that will indicate with what search terms your promotion should appear.
 - YouTube’s video promotions are pay per click, so you pay each time a user clicks on your promotional video.
 - In order to use video promotions, YouTube requires your billing information to be on file.
 - Further instructions for entering billing information, setting a budget, and creating a promotional video can be found on YouTube’s website. Simply, click “advertising” at the bottom of your page, and choose “promoted videos” from the menu on the left hand side of the webpage.



Tourism Tips! Using YouTube

- The following are some suggestions for creating your own original video content:
 - Make sure your videos are short and to the point. Generally, you will not have someone's attention for very long.
 - Get feedback on your videos before posting them to YouTube. This will help you to better gauge the response that you will get from users and make any needed improvements.
 - Keeps things simple, especially when you initially start creating your own videos.
 - Produce quality videos, and edit them with care. People often prefer videos that look and feel professional.
 - Carefully write the description and tags for the video in order to maximize the appearance of your video in search results. Specificity in search keywords helps you to reach your target audience.
 - Make a video about:
 - Your enterprise's amenities
 - The top attractions in the area
 - A diary of customer testimonials
 - Interviews with your enterprise's staff and tour guides
 - Travel tips specific to your destination (what to bring, what to see)
- Encourage people to like your video, add it as a favorite, or leave comments. Prompt action by posing questions to your viewers.
- Organize your videos and the videos that you have marked as favorites into playlists in order to increase ease of use for subscribers to your YouTube channel and direct their attention to specific themes, messages, or content.
 - Perhaps, create a playlist for your destination's attractions or a playlist of videos that showcase your enterprise.
- Use the annotations feature, which displays a text box over the bottom portion of your video, to direct people to your YouTube channel or other videos that you have created. This function is found under "edit video."
- Connect your YouTube account to your other social media accounts. Your activities on YouTube can be automatically posted to Facebook and Twitter.
 - Options to connect YouTube to your Facebook and Twitter accounts can be found under "Auto Share." Click "connect accounts" next to the social media tool to which you would like to connect.

2.7 Social Media - Flickr



Why Use Flickr?

Flickr offers an excellent forum in which to share photos of your enterprise and destination, especially in light of the website's growing popularity. The following are some reasons why you should use Flickr:

- Because of the nature of Flickr, there is a strong presence of travel enthusiasts and adventurers on Flickr.
- Flickr offers the ability to embed and integrate photos with other social media tools.
- Using Flickr, you can tag images with specific keywords, phrases, and locations. When people search these keywords, your images will appear in the search results.

Process: How to Set Up a Flickr Account



Step 1 – Visit Flickr's Website

- Go to www.flickr.com, and click on the link in the top right hand corner of the webpage that says "create your account."

Step 2 – Fill in the Form

- Complete all of the fields on the form in order to sign up.
- Utilize the email address of the person who will be maintaining your enterprise's Flickr account and representing your enterprise on Flickr. You will need a Yahoo or Gmail account in order to create a Flickr account. Otherwise, use your Facebook account information.
- Use the same username that you have been using for your other social media accounts.



Process: Getting Started with Flickr

Once you have set up your Flickr account, Flickr will walk you through steps designed to help you begin using your account.

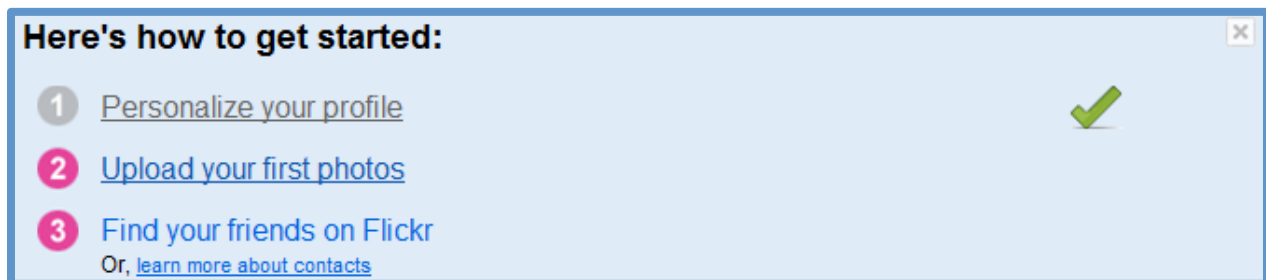


Figure 39: Flickr - Getting Started

Step 1 – Complete Your Profile Information

- From your Flickr homepage, click "personalize your profile" under "here's how to get started."

- Flickr will prompt you to:
 - Create your buddy icon. This is the image that is associated with your username. Consider using your enterprise's logo or a picture of your destination.
 - Choose a custom URL for your Flickr page. This will allow you to point people directly to your Flickr page.
 - Personalize your profile by filling in your enterprise's information. Most importantly, fill in a description of your enterprise.
 - You will always be able to access your profile and edit profile information by placing your cursor over your buddy icon, clicking on the drop down arrow, and selecting "your profile." On the right hand side of the screen, there is a list of options under "manage your profile" that allows you to make any changes.
 - To return to your Flickr page from any other Flickr page, click "home."
 - To adjust your account settings, click your username in the upper right hand corner of the webpage, or place your cursor over your buddy icon, click the drop down arrow, and select "your account." From here, you can manage the privacy settings on your account, set up email notifications, and connect Flickr to your other social media accounts.

Step 2 – Upload Photos

- Choose "upload your first photos" from under the heading, "here's how to get started," or click "upload" at the top of your home page.

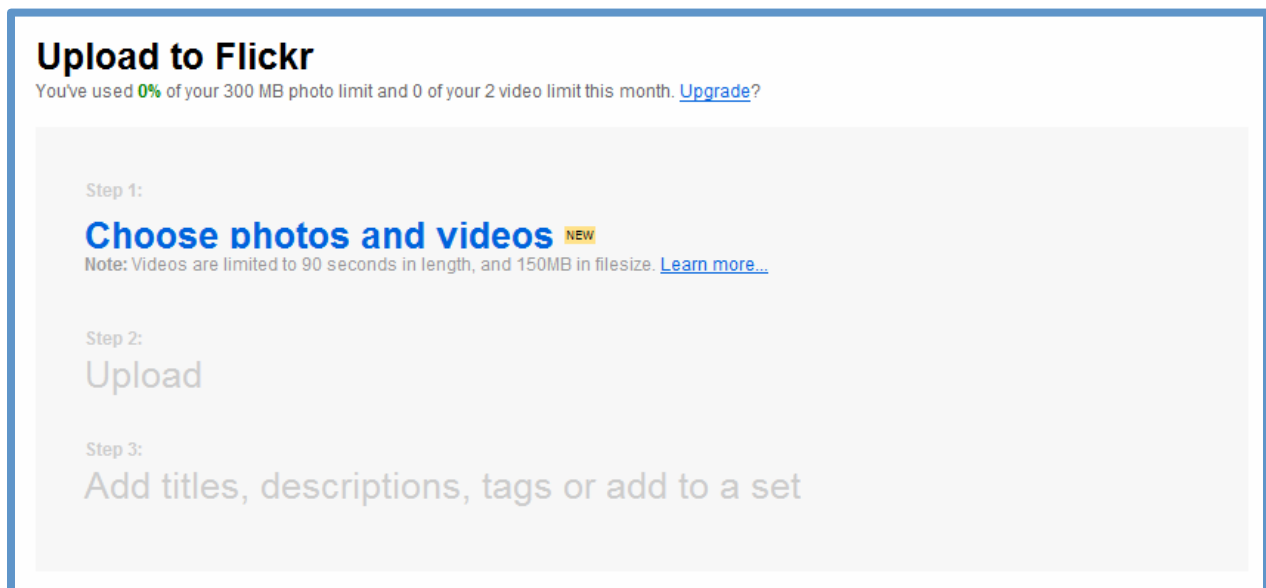



Figure 40: Flickr - Upload

- Flickr will guide you through the steps for uploading photos:
 - Click "choose photos and videos." This will allow you to browse your computer for photos. Select the photos that you would like to upload. To select more than one photo, hold down the control key (Ctrl). Click "open," and you will see the photos in a list to be uploaded.
 - Click "upload photos and videos."

- Flickr will indicate when the photos have finished uploading and prompt you to “enter a description.” Click on this link.
- Enter a title and description for each photo that you have uploaded.
- You have the option to enter tags (keywords that will prompt your photos to show up in search results) for your photos as a batch, or you may enter tags separately for each individual photo.
- Save any changes.
- Then, you will be taken to your photo stream.


Titles, descriptions, tags



Title:

Description:

Tags:



Title:

Description:

Tags:

Figure 41: Flickr - Tagging and Describing Photos

Step 3 – Edit & Organize Your Photos

Once you have uploaded photos, you will want to edit and organize them so that users can easily navigate through your photos.

To edit permissions, tags, titles, and descriptions:

- Click “Organize & Create” from your home page.

- From this screen, you can edit your photos as a batch or individually. To edit a photo individually, double click on the photo.
- To edit multiple photos at once, drag the photos that you would like to work with from the selection at the bottom of the screen to the batch.
- Click “edit photos” in order to alter tags, titles, and descriptions.
- Use the other menu options to make additional changes to your photos.

You can organize your photos into sets which are groupings of your photos. Collections, another level of organization, are composed of multiple sets. To create a set:

- Click “Organize & Create” from your home page.
- Drag the photos that you would like to put into the set from the selection at the bottom of the screen to the batch.
- Click the arrow next to “add to set” in order to open the drop down menu. Choose whether you would like to add the photos to a new set or an existing set.
- If you are creating a new set, you will be prompted to enter a title and description for the set.
- Click “save.”

To create a collection:

- Click “Organize & Create” from your home page.
- Go to the tab labeled “Sets & Collections.”
- Click the link to create a new collection.
- Enter a title and description for the collection.
- Choose the sets that you would like to add to the collection, and drag them into the collection.

You can also organize photos using your map. Geo-tagging is a function that allows you to add geographical information, such as a location, to various media, including photos. To add photos to your map:

- Click “Organize & Create.”
- Go to the tab labeled “Map.”
- Find the location where your photo was taken on the map using the search box at the top right hand corner of the screen.
- Use the zoom feature to zoom in and out.
- Drag and drop your photos onto the map.

Step 4 – Interact With Other Users on Flickr

- Use the search feature to search for your destination on Flickr. See what others have posted for your destination, and read some of the comments that people have left on the photos.
- Locate any groups for your destination or activities, hobbies, and interests related to your enterprise, and join them. If no groups exist for your destination, attraction, or activity, create one. For example, try searching “horseback riding,” “snorkeling,” “Costa Rica,” or “ecotourism.”
- Add your photos to groups. Members of the group will be prompted to view your photos, and people with an interest in the subject matter of the group will be inclined to look through the group’s photos.

- Encourage people to leave comments on your photos.

Tourism Tips! Using Flickr



- Connect Flickr to your other social media accounts such as Facebook. This feature allows updates that you make to your Flickr page to show up on your Facebook feed, directing traffic to your Flickr page.
 - View your account settings by moving your cursor over your buddy icon, clicking the arrow to open the drop down menu, and selecting “your account.”
 - Click on the tab that reads “Sharing & Extending.”
 - Select “connect” and then “allow” so that Flickr can access your Facebook account.
- Always use the geo-tagging function by placing your photos on your map. This feature allows people to find your photos when they search for a location or when they are browsing the map.
- Carefully choose tags for your images. This will allow users to locate your photos more easily when they search for key words. You want to reach your target audience, so it is often helpful to include specific keywords for which you believe your audience would search.
- Take advantage of other users’ content by creating galleries. A gallery is a collection of 18 photos, putting photos from a variety of sources in one location. You are able to combine photos in a unique, interesting, and informative way. To create a gallery:
 - Go to the photo that you would like to add to the gallery.
 - Click the arrow next to “actions” in order to open the drop down menu, and choose “add to a gallery.”
 - If you have not created a gallery yet or if all of your galleries are full, you will be prompted to create a new gallery.
 - Enter a title and description of the gallery.
 - Click “create gallery.”
- If your marketing budget allows, consider a Flickr pro account. The pro account, which requires an annual fee, offers more features than a free Flickr account. For example, pro account holders can view statistics for their photos.

2.8 Social Media - Blogging & Other Online Forums

Why Blog?

Blogging allows you to maintain an online diary or journal for your enterprise, as you share your stories, experiences, and thoughts with your customers. The following are reasons why your enterprise should start a blog:



- Blogging offers the ability to share your knowledge of sustainable tourism, local culture, native plants and animals, attractions, activities, and upcoming events. You can provide customers with informal information about your destination and enterprise.
- You can offer travel advice and share stories about staff and customers' experiences at your enterprise.
- Blogging gives you an outlet through which to direct people to your website and other social media pages.
- Blogs tend to be more informal than your enterprise's official website, promoting interaction and accessibility. You can engage in a conversation with your customers through comments.

Process: How to Set Up a Blog Using WordPress



WordPress is a website that offers users free software for drafting and posting blogs. Blogs are posted using an independent service, so you do not need to have your own server in order to start blogging.

Step 1 – Visit WordPress' Website

- Go to <http://wordpress.com>, and click "sign up now."

Step 2 – Fill in the Form

- Select your blog address by typing in the name of your enterprise. WordPress will tell you if this name is available. Because you are using WordPress' server and domain name, creation of your blog is free. Click "want your own domain?" and then "no thanks. I prefer to use myname.wordpress.com for free."
- Your username should be the name of your enterprise.
- Use the email address of the person who you have tasked with updating your enterprise's blog, as he or she will receive email notifications about the blog.
- Click "sign up."

Step 3 – Activate Your Account

- Follow the link provided in the body of the email that you receive from WordPress in order to activate your account.
- After you activate your account, you should be able to log in to WordPress and begin working on your blog.

Get your own WordPress.com account in seconds

Fill out this one-step form and you'll be blogging seconds later!

Blog Address

.wordpress.com ✕

Want your own domain?

Blog is a required value and cannot be empty.

Choose a wordpress.com address or get your own URL with a custom domain name. (?)

Sign up for just a username.

Username

At least 4 characters.
Lowercase letters and numbers only.

Password

Use a mix of upper and lowercase characters to create a strong password.

Confirm

If your password isn't strong enough, you won't be able to continue with signup.

E-mail Address

We send *important* administration notices to this address.

☐ Subscribe to our blog to learn about new themes, features, and other news.

Sign up →

Figure 42: WordPress - Getting Started

Tourism Tips! Blogging



- Keep your blog short (around 400 words). You do not have very much time to capture a reader's attention, so make sure your blog draws them in and keeps them engaged.
- Update your blog frequently. When it comes to blogging, people are interested in the latest information.
- Some ideas for the content of your blog include:
 - Stories & anecdotes about occurrences at your enterprise
 - Local news
 - Information about sustainability projects that your enterprise is undertaking
 - Information about sustainability projects in the local community
 - Local events
 - Interviews with staff, tour guides, and customers
 - Customer feedback
 - Frequently asked questions (FAQs)
 - Information about local culture, animal life, and plant life
 - Trip ideas
- Use a more informal and casual tone in your blog.

- See what other people are talking about and learn what your target audience cares about by locating and following blogs that are similar to yours. You can search for themes at Techorati.com and AllTop.com.
- Provide the link to your blog on your website if you are using an independent server and do not post the blog directly to your website.
- Link your blog to your other social media accounts. Direct people to your Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, and Flickr accounts from your blog, and tell people about your blog on these sites.
- Use your blog to build a community around your enterprise, your destination, and shared interests such as sustainable tourism.

Other Online Forums

Beyond posting to your blog, there are other forums available on the internet where you can engage in discussions, publish your blog entries, and post information related to your enterprise, your destination, and sustainable tourism.

Wikis are websites where text can be edited or changed by anyone, representing a collection of knowledge and opinions. Some travel wikis include:

- The Good Travel & Tourism Wiki (<http://www.goodtravelwiki.com/>)
- Trip Advisor Inside (<http://www.tripadvisor.com/TravelHome>)

Lonely Planet hosts a travel forum called Thorn Tree at <http://www.lonelyplanet.com/thorntree/index.jspa> where people discuss travel issues and tips.

Also, try searching for forums specific to a destination or an activity. For example, search for online forums on “Kenya” or “bungy jumping.” By establishing a presence in niche forums, you will be able to more easily locate and build relationships with members of your target market.

2.9 Social Media - Trip Advisor

Why Use Trip Advisor?

Even though Trip Advisor is not a social media website, it is an important and widely accessed online community related to travel and tourism. Here are some reasons why you should use Trip Advisor:



- Trip Advisor is the world's largest travel website. Each month, there are millions of visitors to the website.
- People commonly use Trip Advisor when they are planning their vacations. They consider the reviews and advice offered by other travelers, as they make decisions.
- You can monitor what others are saying about your enterprise and respond to praise and criticism in a way that reinforces the positive image that you would like to portray of your enterprise. Negative reviews can be overset when they are honestly and respectfully addressed, and you can demonstrate that you are attentive, responsive, willing to improve, and value your customers.
- Represent your enterprise, and manage your image, brand, and reputation.

Get Your Enterprise Listed on Trip Advisor

If your enterprise is not yet listed on Trip Advisor, then request that a listing be created.

- Go to <http://www.tripadvisor.ca/pages/getlisted.html>.
- Select the category that your enterprise falls into from accommodations, attractions, restaurants, and resources.
- Click on the link that takes you to the appropriate request form. For example, if your enterprise is an eco-lodge, click "accommodations" and then "accommodation listing request."
- Fill in the form completely and accurately.
- Click "submit."

Figure 43: TripAdvisor - Getting Enterprise Listed

Process: How to Set Up a Trip Advisor Account for a Business



While travelers themselves generally write reviews and post comments on Trip Advisor, you can create an account as a business in order to see what people are saying, manage reviews, and respond to any criticism through the "management response" feature.

Step 1 – Visit Trip Advisor’s Website

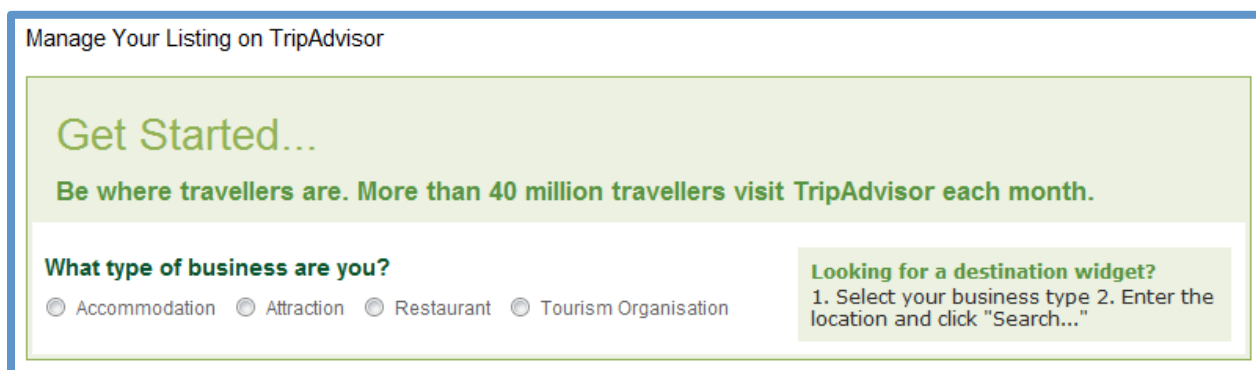
- Go to www.tripadvisor.com, and click “register now.”

Step 2 – Fill in the Form

- Your screen name should be the name of your enterprise.
- Use the email address of the person that you have tasked with managing your Trip Advisor account.
- Click “sign up.”

Step 3 – Register as the Owner or Representative of Your Enterprise

- Go to www.tripadvisor.com, scroll to the bottom of the webpage, and click on “business listings.”
- Click “sign up” to register as a representative of your enterprise.
- Follow Trip Advisor’s onscreen instructions.
- Registering as a representative of your enterprise allows you to manage your enterprise’s listing on Trip Advisor.



Manage Your Listing on TripAdvisor

Get Started...

Be where travellers are. More than 40 million travellers visit TripAdvisor each month.

What type of business are you?

☐ Accommodation ☐ Attraction ☐ Restaurant ☐ Tourism Organisation

Looking for a destination widget?
1. Select your business type 2. Enter the location and click "Search..."

Figure 44: TripAdvisor - Getting Started

Process: Getting Started with Trip Advisor



Step 1 – Update Your Profile

- In the upper right hand corner of the webpage, click the arrow next to “Your Trip Advisor” in order to open the drop down menu.
- Select “profile.”
- Complete the profile with information about your enterprise. Include a link to your website.

Step 2 – Manage Your Listing

- Go to your Owner’s page, and click “manage your listing.”
- You will then be able to add descriptions and photos to your enterprise’s listing.

Step 3 – Utilize the Management Response Feature

As a representative of your enterprise who is registered with Trip Advisor, you can respond to reviews written about your enterprise. If your response aligns with the guidelines set out by Trip Advisor, it will be displayed under the review.

- In your Owner’s Center, go to “manage your listing,” and click “respond to a review.”
- Follow the directions provided by Trip Advisor.
- Please note that Trip Advisor has certain rules regarding etiquette and the content of posts. Review the management response guidelines at http://www.tripadvisor.com/help/management_response_guidelines for more information about how to respond to reviews.

Step 4 – Trip Advisor Widgets

Trip Advisor widgets allow you to include Trip Advisor content on your website. Your site’s users can view Trip Advisor resources directly on your website or link to the Trip Advisor website. Because Trip Advisor is a website that is independent of your enterprise and offers reviews from travelers, its resources generate credibility for your enterprise. Customers can read the thoughts and opinions of people who are outside of your organization and find validation for your claims.

Trip Advisor widgets include:

- Fixed size and customizable traveler photos
- Fixed size and customizable rave reviews
- Top properties
- Recent forum posts
- Getaways
- What's nearby?
- Property summary rating
- Recent property reviews
- Self-service property
- Excellent badge
- Featured on Trip Advisor badges
- Check rates
- Write a review
- Hotel search
- Link to Trip Advisor
- Encourage Clients to read or write reviews

Visit <http://www.tripadvisor.com/WidgetEmbed> for more information about individual Trip Advisor widgets.

See below for some examples of Trip Advisor widgets.

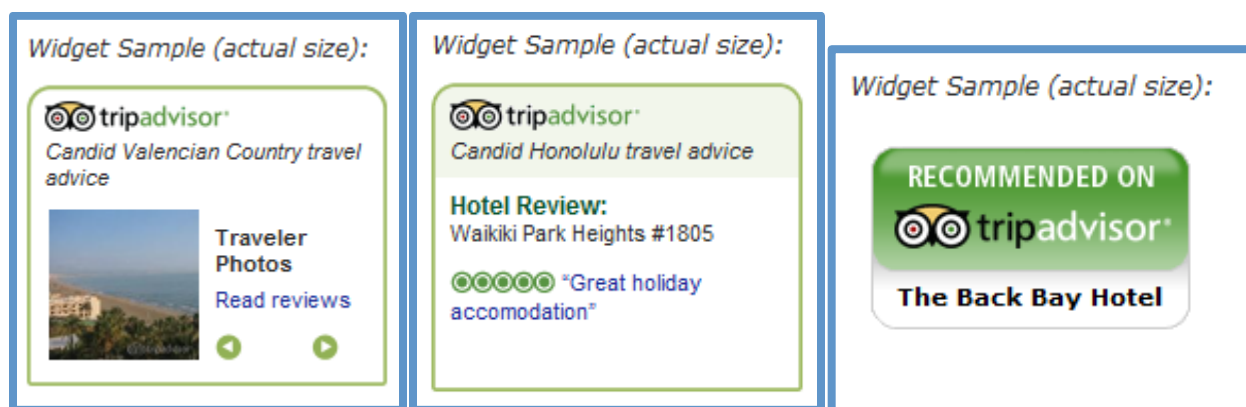


Figure 45: TripAdvisor Widgets

To use a Trip Advisor widget on your blog or website, contact widgets@tripadvisor.com.

Step 5 – Trip Advisor Advertisements

Trip Advisor allows you to advertise your enterprise on its website at a cost. If your marketing budget permits and analysis of your target market indicates that you will be able to reach customers on Trip Advisor, you should consider advertising on this website.

Advertising opportunities include:

Best Australia Travel Deals

Australia: Great Rooms. Great Rates.
Travelocity Hotel rooms at up to 50% off.

New South Wales: Vacation Package Specialists
Expedia Vacations Save on flight + hotel packages.
Click or call now: **1-800-713-8214**

Tasmania: Call Classic Vacations at
 1-866-440-7857

ClassicVacations.com Value added savings on luxury Hotels with personal service

Sydney: Save with Country Inns & Suites
CountryInns.com Book early and receive 25% off rates at participating hotels.

Sponsored Links *

Figure 46: TripAdvisor Text Link

BARCELONA
SPRING & SUMMER GUIDE 2007

The best places to eat, sleep and play in Barcelona this spring and summer

With more than 5 million reviews and opinions, TripAdvisor makes travel planning a snap for the 20 million travelers visiting our site each month.

tripadvisor
get the truth. then go.™

Figure 47: TripAdvisor Print Travel Guide

tripadvisor
get the truth. then go.™

MEMBER UPDATE
April 2007

Bring Everybody Along on Your Next Vacation

Let your friends join you on your next trip without the extra airfare! TripAdvisor has partnered with TravelPod to give you a new and exciting way to preserve and share your experiences on the road - [a FREE travel blog](#).

With TravelPod you can easily:

- Post unlimited photos and videos alongside your memories.
- Write about your trip so your friends and family can read about your adventures as you experience them.
- Plot your trip on a map for everyone to see.
- Send and receive messages from friends and family.

Your blog will never expire, so neither will your memories. Start your own [travel blog today](#), or head to [www.travelpod.com](#) to find out more!

The Web's Original Travel Blog

The line of luxury rewards cards that gets you benefits beyond regular rewards

VISA SIGNATURE

Find the one that's right for you. >

Solo Adventures

Before the summer holiday rush, take a getaway just for you. Feeling adventurous, indulgent or just want to do some good on your next vacation? Check out our top picks for a solo escape.

Exciting Adventures

- Grand Canyon, Ariz.: [Best Western Grand Canyon Suite Inn](#)
- Jackson, Wyo.: [Wyoming Inn of Jackson Hole](#)
- Costa Rica: [Makanda by the Sea](#)

Beautiful Baja
[See more pictures](#)

Top 10
PRESENTED BY
VISA SIGNATURE

Our travelers' favorite destinations
Where are your fellow travelers planning on going? Check out April's top 10 destinations on TripAdvisor.

1. [Puerto Cancun](#)
2. [Las Vegas](#)
3. [New York City](#)
4. [Cancun](#)
5. [Paris](#)
6. [Playa del Carmen](#)
7. [London](#)
8. [Orlando](#)
9. [Rome](#)
10. [Varadero Beach, Cuba](#)

Find Hotels
Travelers Trust

City:

Check-in: Apr 27

Check-out: Apr 29

Figure 49: TripAdvisor Member Update

BOOK NOW

AUSTRALIA'S OUTBACK

DEPART FROM LOS ANGELES

FROM \$1,098*

PER PERSON ROUNDTrip

*Taxes, fees, and restrictions apply

share our story

NORTHERN TERRITORY
[australiasoutback.com](#)

Figure 48: TripAdvisor Banner

- Business Listings
 - You can provide your contact information (phone number, email address, website) along with your enterprise listing for a fee. The cost varies depending on the size and location of the enterprise, but prices start at \$40/month.

Trip Advisor's advertising department also offers detailed demographics about your customers, including income, age, travel behavior, and purchasing behavior.

In order to acquire information specific to your enterprise and its advertising efforts, visit <http://www.tripadvisor.com/MediaKit/>, and select the tab labeled "contact us." Fill in the form in order to contact one of Trip Advisor's sales representatives.

Tourism Tips! Trip Advisor

- Be sure that you are honestly representing your enterprise on Trip Advisor. Other users should know that you are speaking on behalf of your enterprise, and you are not an impartial third party.
- Show that you value your customers by thanking them for kind words as well as addressing their concerns and criticisms.
- Follow Trip Advisor's code of conduct.



2.10 Metrics: Measuring the Success of a Social Media Marketing Campaign

One of the advantages of social media marketing is the ability to measure the success of your marketing campaign using metrics. Metrics are a measure of your enterprise's efforts and performance, and they indicate the progress that you have made toward your goals. Metrics allow you to assess what your enterprise is doing well and where you can improve your activities.

In regards to social media, it is important to measure the actions that you are taking, such as the number of photos uploaded to Flickr, the number of status updates on Facebook, or the number and frequency of tweets, as well as the outcomes of your efforts, including the number of page views, the number of Facebook fans, or the number of times your video is liked on YouTube. You will want to be able to measure both inputs and outputs in order to compare your efforts to the results that you experience.

Considering the above examples, there are many basic metrics that you can follow depending on your enterprise's specific goals. The metrics that you choose to use should align with your objectives and be an accurate and encompassing indication of your success. Please review *Developing a Social Media Strategy* for further information on goal setting.

For instance, if your enterprise's goal is to increase customers' knowledge of your destination or product and service offering over the next 3 months, then you may monitor the number of informational links you post on Twitter and Facebook, the number of status updates that tell customers about your offering, or the number of times that you responded to a customer's comment in that 3 month period. To judge the results of your efforts, you may decide to follow the number of page views or the number and content of comments left by users on a post, photo, or video.

Metrics can be collected from your social media accounts and pages (Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, YouTube, WordPress, Trip Advisor). Because many of your social media accounts direct people to your website, you may want to consider reviewing the metrics that you use to evaluate your website in light of your activities on social media sites. These benchmarks include the number of page views or the amount of time spent on a web page. Also, there are many tools available on the Internet to help you gather metrics related to your social media accounts and online activities. These tools will be discussed in further detail in the next section.

Google Alerts

Google Alerts is a service provided by Google that allows you to monitor content online. You select terms, keywords, or topics that you would like to follow, and Google sends you an alert when there is new content available on the Internet related to these subjects. Throughout the process, Google searches the news, websites, blogs, videos, and groups for your search terms, and you can select how often you would like to be notified of new content.

Google Alerts can help you as you establish metrics and benchmarks for your social media campaign by allowing you to gauge the scope of your online presence. For instance, you are able to view where you enterprise is mentioned online and how often this occurs.

Why Use Google Alerts

Google Alerts is a very useful tool for keeping up with the latest developments in various subject areas. Here are some reasons why you should use Google Alerts:

- You can observe what people are saying about you by monitoring content that is published on your enterprise and destination.
- You can see who is talking about your enterprise or destination online and locate potential customers.
- Google uses its search engine features to locate content related to your search terms on a routine basis, therefore involving minimal time and effort on your part.
- You can follow news about the industry and keep up with the latest developments in sustainable tourism.
- You can research and monitor your competitors.
- You can locate interesting articles, videos, and blogs to post to your social media pages.
- Google Alerts integrate with your Gmail account, making organizing and reading the alerts easy; however, you do not need a Gmail account to set up alerts.



Process: How to Set Up Google Alerts

Step 1 – Visit Google’s Website

- Go to <http://www.google.com/alerts>.

Step 2 – Fill in the Form

- Enter the search terms for which you would like Google to examine online content.
- Select the type of media that you would like Google to search and how often you would like to receive alerts. Selecting “everything” encompasses all forms of media listed in the drop down menu.
- Enter your email address of the person who will responsible for managing your enterprise’s alerts.
- Click “Create Alert.”
- You can set up as many alerts as you would like. Simply repeat this process.

Figure 50: Google Alerts - Alert Creation

Facebook Analytics: Insights

Facebook Insights is an analytical tool provided by Facebook that supplies fan page administrators with benchmarks for their fan page. These metrics include:

- Number of new likes
- Total number of likes
- Number of active users
- Number of unlikes
- Number of unique page views
- Number of wall posts
- Number of comments
- Demographics of your fans (gender and age)
- Number of tab views
- Number of video views, audio listens, and photo views

In this way, Insights allows you to gauge and assess your interaction with your fans while measuring the outcomes of your efforts.

Why Use Facebook Insights

The following are some reasons why you should use Insights:

- Facebook Insights is free!
- Facebook gathers the metrics for you and presents them in an easy-to-read format.
- You can export data to Microsoft Excel.
- Facebook calculates the percent change in various metrics, so you can view upward and downward trends over time.



Process: How to View Your Fan Page's Insights

Step 1 – Go to your Facebook Fan Page

- Please note that you must be logged in using your page administrator's Facebook account. Only page administrators can view Facebook Insights.

Step 2 – Go to Insights

- Next to the heading, "Insights," on the left hand side of the page, click "see all."

Step 3 – View Insights

- For more information, click "see details."



Figure 51: Facebook Analytics

3. Public Relations

Overview

In this chapter, we will discuss:

- Importance of Public Relations and planning involved
- Various methods for generating publicity
- Strategies for leveraging publicity
- Cultivating alliances and partnerships for publicity
- Managing potential hazards and risks
- Monitoring and maintaining publicity



3.1 Introduction

Tourists, especially those attracted to adventure tourism, enjoy the sharing of information and personal experiences almost as much as their travel. When traveling, tourists feel obligated to know the ins and outs of their vacation for a number of reasons such as security, accessibility, resources and attractions and also to ensure value. In order to access important and trustworthy information, considerable personal research can be expected from the consumer.

Customers are looking for objective information and personal accounts that they can rely on and expect to encounter through their own experiences. Within the tourism industry, tools and methods that facilitate the exchange of information and breach large audiences are absolutely necessary.

Within this chapter, we will discuss the importance of establishing an effective public relations campaign by exploring opportunities through traditional media and web-based campaigns. The chapter will discuss various methods for generating publicity with different PR tools to effectively spread your message and gain reputability.

Definition

The term “public relations” refers to all the actions and activities that an enterprise uses to build or maintain a positive image and build lasting relationships. In order to gain credibility and recognition within the industry, there must be constant focus on expanding the influence of your enterprise. Public relations transcends traditional advertising messages because the information provided is seen as objective and unbiased. Publicity generated from independent sources has the potential to reach larger audiences possibly too expensive to access via advertising campaigns. Generating positive “publicity” requires you to effectively communicate via various media avenues, such as the internet, travel fairs, NGOs or other development agencies.

Positive PR is what enables a firm to capitalize on all elements of the marketing strategy, including advertising, sales promotion, merchandising, etc. As an enterprise, you want to make sure that the services you provide are of high quality. Unbiased reviews from the public hold an extremely high value and generally have an above average impact on customers. This means that when your enterprise is delivering great service, it can be translated into Positive PR, and your enterprise is lauded by different media outlets. Positive public relations underscores key attributes of your enterprise and helps it to establish a solid reputation.

Negative PR can deplete your enterprise and deny your enterprise sources of competitive advantage. The expression “any exposure is good exposure” does not apply to tourism. It is important to understand the consumer’s role and where they are most active in searching for and sharing information. Many causes of negative publicity originate from uncontrollable forces (think hurricanes). Creating a comprehensive public relations plan will help to mitigate any risks associated with negative publicity. However, it is the responsibility of your enterprise to design, develop, and implement an attractive image compatible for a PR campaign. *Refer to Crisis Management section for strategies to mitigate risk.*

3.2 Assessment & Planning

Even with limited resources, building a public relations campaign can help reach your target market. There are three guidelines or steps that should be followed when beginning to assess and plan a PR campaign.



Process: Assessing and Planning a PR Campaign

Step One: Reviewing your budget

The initial step in planning your PR campaign is reviewing your marketing budget. It is important to design a plan that remains within the financial boundaries for public relations outlined at the beginning of your marketing strategy. Following your financial outline will ensure that your campaign does not exceed necessary funds or create unnecessary financial risks

Step Two: Short term objectives

As a manager, begin with defining the short term objectives for your campaign. Reviewing your budget should help formulate short term objectives associated with cost efficiency. Creating deadlines and a schedule for your plan will help achieve these objectives and remain on task. Your schedule and short term goals will allow you to see where you will direct your PR efforts and the methods you plan to use.

Step Three: Long term objectives

The long term objectives should reflect the final goals and desired results of your plan. Carefully consider the image you want to build for your enterprise and then examine how the enterprise plans to sustain that image. The tourism industry increasingly shows demand for sustainable efforts, and it has recognized the importance of heavily publicizing these initiatives. Recent trends have shown that the long term objective of “normalizing sustainability” is necessary to legitimize the industry in the eyes of the consumer. As a local tourism enterprise, you are responsible for incorporating these goals into your plan in order to generate universal appeal for the industry.

3.3 PR Tools & Tactics

Media Relations

In the travel industry, gaining media exposure is a necessity. Primary modes of communication, which are now dependent on ever changing technology, are to be combined with traditional media and promotional activities to penetrate the travel and tourism market. Here are the tools you need to build an effective public image:

1. **Press Toolkits** are essential tools for coordinating with the press. Reporters and the press often work off of deadlines which means you should anticipate their inquiries in advance. A great way to anticipate requests is through press toolkits. These kits should constantly be updated and posted on your enterprise's website for quick and relevant access to enterprise information. Press toolkit components include:
 - a. **Fact sheet.** This should include all information about the products and services your enterprise provides in an organized manner
 - b. **Story Ideas.** A list or compilation of ideas that highlight attributes and successes of the enterprise are noted here. Positive themes recognized in your enterprise's case studies, recent news articles, and prior press coverage indicate the type of ideas that should be listed. Make sure stories and cases are relevant and translate your desired image
 - c. **Brochure.** If already produced, be sure to include a copy of your enterprise's brochure. If not, *refer to Sales and Distribution Chapter*.
 - d. **Photos and Logos.** Included in the press toolkit should be print quality images and logos that are of high resolution and downloadable. These images will provide visual representation of your enterprise and its service offerings.
 - e. **Awards and Certificates.** Highlighted in the press toolkit should be any awards or certificates granted for sustainability efforts. *Refer to Creating Alliances/ Partnerships for a list of awards and certificate schemes.*
 - f. **Contact Information.** Staff biographies and areas of specialty should be presented with easy to find, individual contact references and position titles.



Figure 52: Press Kit Examples

2. **Press Trips**, also called media trips or media familiarization trips, are complimentary trips for travel writers and journalists to experience a tourism product or service. Some media outlets refuse such trips because they feel it is not a source of unbiased review. Others accept them when working on a tight budget, but they may also be done in secret under an alias. The person then reports on your enterprise. Press trips can be a source of large expenditure and should be carefully planned within financial constraints. Develop trips with specific objectives to optimize success. Begin by contacting desired editors and travel writers. Refer to contacting guidebooks sections for additional resources.
3. **Press Releases** will help organize and transmit current and useful enterprise information, bringing positive publicity to your enterprise. A press release can announce a variety of items such as scheduled events, promotional activities, new products or services, awards or other accomplishments. Often a press release is used to deliver a message or generate appeal for a featured story or upcoming event. Make sure that press release information is current and readily available for reporters. In a digital age, the majority of press release will be reviewed online. Search Engine Optimization methods will help you maximize your outreach. Understanding the type of traffic your enterprise receives and what attributes are most represented will allow you to make your press releases more readily available to the appropriate audiences. Identifying effective keywords, title tags, links, imagery and other alternative attributes will help to integrate consumers with your enterprise *Refer to Search Engine Optimization*.

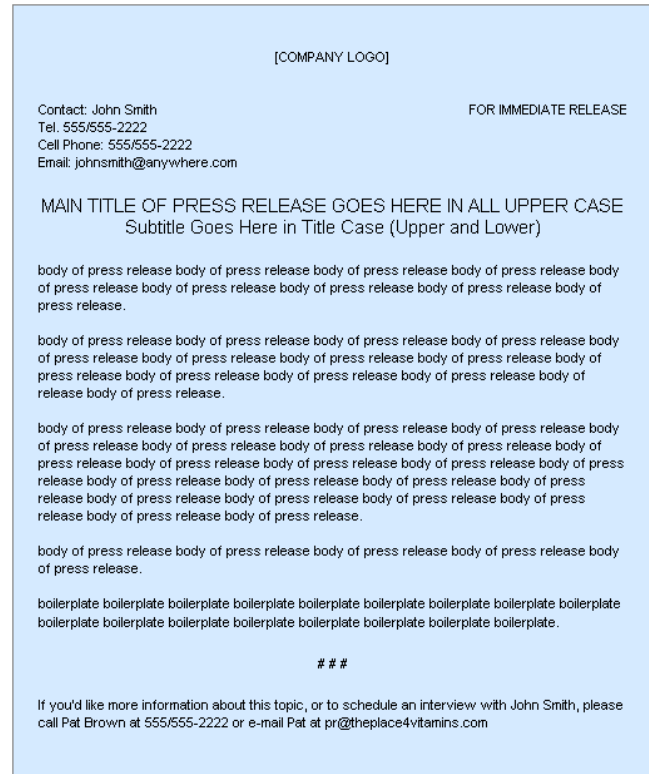


Figure 53: Press Release Formatting

4. Targeted Story Pitches & Case Studies are essential for providing journalists or related media contacts with valuable, up to date and interesting information about your enterprise. As a manager, you are the one who knows all the attributes surrounding your enterprise; being able to organize and document these aspects will highlight where journalists should target their stories and reviews. Generate ideas that seem unique and specific to your enterprise, and remember that differentiating your services will attract editors and journalists who constantly seek originality. Story pitches should be clear, abundant and posted on your website. They are also included in your fact sheet as a part of your press toolkit. The amount of press coverage and publicity you generate largely depends on how proactive you are as a manager with the press. To build relationships with targeted journalists and media enterprises you can email them personally and introduce hot news upon which they can be the first to report. Reaching out to the press who specialize in niche publications and sustainable travel will cultivate loyal partnerships in the industry and provide easy access to media resources.

Warning! Press Releases

- Don't just send a news release for "Big News;" find reasons to send them all the time. Generate appeal for buyers' not just journalists and include offers that incentivize consumers to respond. Make sure to add links and directions to your company website and optimize your language.
- Do not impose yourself. Journalists can be sensitive. Being too pushy can hurt your success.

**Process: Leveraging Editorials**

Leveraging Editorials and your media exposure will determine the extent to which your PR campaign will grow and become sustainable. Positive press, favorable editorials or reviews and successes you have achieved should be illustrated in every aspect of your enterprise. Your tourism enterprises may be operating off a small marketing budget, so identifying cost effective ways to leverage your message is essential. Remember, the more accolades the consumer sees when investigating your enterprise, the more confidence they will have in booking a trip there. There are a number of steps to be taken to leverage your great news.

Step One:

Identify effective and frequent vocabulary relevant to your enterprise and services. Use SEO to track user trends, and then, increase the volume of that vocabulary in all literature produced by your enterprise. Highlight prestigious publication names and authors to grab the reader's attention and show authenticity.

Step Two:

Showcase your enterprise's logo on print collateral, electronic materials and merchandise as much as possible while keeping the design aesthetically pleasing. Building your brand identity will increase consumer confidence. The more that consumers see your enterprise logo the more legitimate and secure your enterprise and services will be perceived.

Step Three:

Highlight certifications and awards that your enterprise has achieved. These awards will generate significant awareness by the consumer because they accurately and objectively market sustainability only. Awards and certifications should be clearly posted and explained; tourists want to know why they should explore your enterprise. Your goal is promote sustainability to the consumer; any awards received should be clearly visible on your website and online portals.

Step Four:

Match testimonials from your clients to compliment content supporting your message. First-hand accounts of client's experiences that support the message sought by the enterprise are considered a homerun. Review client testimonials and post them as snippets on your web pages, newsletters, blogs, and wherever they can complement themes outlined by the enterprise. Exposing these customer testimonies and flooding them into all promotional strategies will project the most valuable source of objective information to the largest possible audience. **See figure 2 for examples.*

Step Five:

Emphasize any celebrity visits or headline acts of travel philanthropy. A great way to gain publicity is through the greatest practitioners of public relations: celebrities. Creating a guestbook or way to represent and track important clients will ensure general consumer confidence. Tourists seek new trends and unique experiences, and celebrity involvement can highlight these trends. Such exposure

with celebrities inherently defines a level of credibility attractive to all consumers. Showcase appearances; they are celebrities!

Step Six:

Press pages serve as a way to organize your leveraging efforts. A press page will include most of the aforementioned information in one place. A press page should be the most effective online PR strategy used by your enterprise website. As a reservoir of publicity materials, a press page will help organize your leveraging methods. Links, testimonials and awards can be showcased in a variety of areas to create many avenues that will eventually bring the consumer to your enterprise.

Although the steps for leveraging your editorials are listed, it is important to understand that it is a collective process. Leveraging editorials is incremental and ongoing. The keywords and logos identified in step one need to be utilized to build recognition. The key is to use these editorials to reinforce themes you wish to promote. For example, Wildfitness carefully places positive testimonials from past clients, highlighting a large value of service for low costs on their pricing and rates webpage. Using carefully selected keywords, testimonials, logos and quotes that support your images and ideas will constantly remind consumers who you are and why you are the best choice. Properly leveraging your media will generate high levels of publicity that otherwise are difficult to reach through advertising campaigns.

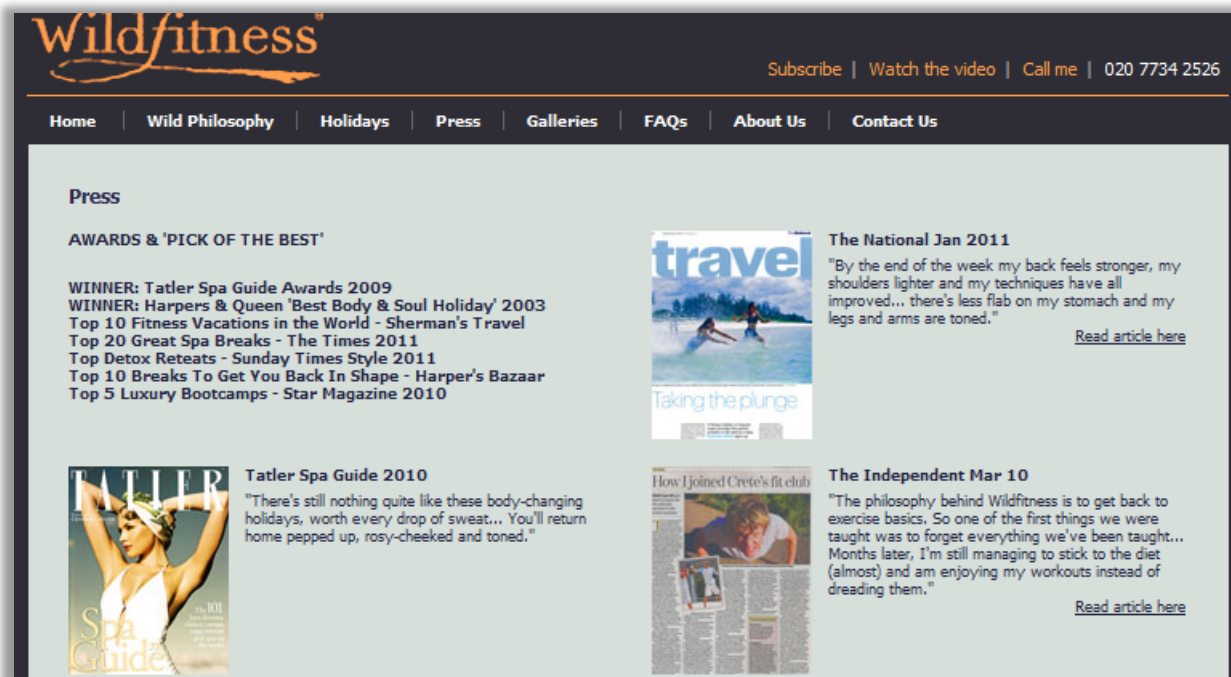


Figure 54: Press Page Example

News Distribution

Email Newsletters serve as a key element to sustaining clients and encouraging repeat business. Newsletters and Email Marketing are the most effective way to maintain communication with clients. It helps introduce them to new experiences beyond their initial interests. Also, email newsletters serve as an avenue to share customer information with tourism suppliers, a tactic that could increase

profitability. The personalization strategy through emails will build higher levels of consumer loyalty. *Refer to Customer Relations Management to determine the extent to which this can be done.*

Emails will provide real-time reporting of results, a method useful both for your enterprise and the consumer. Finally, become familiar and utilize email signatures. Concluding your email with enterprise name, contact information, links to your website or other relevant pages can be done by email signature. This is great place for a one liner or brief slogan that underscores your enterprise's message.

Tourism Tip!

- Email addresses used should be reputable and trusted. Use authoritative name such as 'Editor@' or 'first name@'. Remember to use objective, easy to scan content and formatting to avoid browser problems. Make your newsletters printable and visually pleasing with a special focus on the first email.



Online News can be distributed in a variety of ways that is not just limited to sending emails. Abundantly providing news online will always help promote your enterprise. Create links, and cross references and relationships to reinforce desired messages just as you would when matching editorials. **Refer back to leveraging editorials.*

As a tourism enterprise you are able to spread your news through multiple sources. Some sources are,

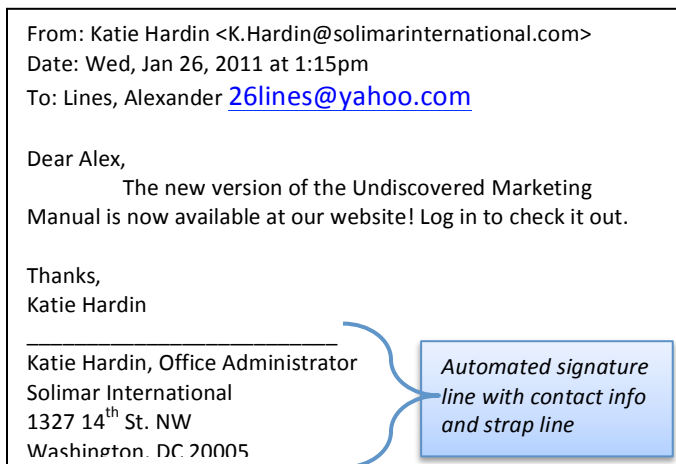


Figure 55: Email Signature Line Example

- DMO's / Tourism Board Websites
 - Adventure Travel Trade Organization
 - Sustainable Travel International
- Industry Websites
 - www.ecotourism.org
 - www.responsibletravel.org
- Partners / Ally Websites

Service providers, consumer organizations, as well as the local enterprises with which you work share news online. Consumers often work backwards from deciding what they would like to experience to then determining how to experience it. Spreading news through partners' websites will increase the amount of digital recognition your enterprise receives.

Guidebooks

Guidebooks are a great source of objective information that generates exposure without having to develop an expensive advertising campaign. The information guidebooks provide are perceived by the consumer as unbiased which makes being featured or even listed in them essential. As a reference for planning accommodations, food, transportation, activities and more, guidebooks are one of the top resources used by adventure tourists and many times the only source used when traveling.

The way in which guidebooks promote sustainable tourism varies on the enterprise and authors. However, the first step is to contact the guidebook company either by email or telephone. Most guidebooks facilitate inquiries via online submission forms. Here is a list of top guidebooks and their online and mailing contact information:

Guide Book	Contact Information		
	Internet	Mailing	Phone
	http://www.frommers.com/contact_us/form_guidebooks.html	Frommer's Travel Guides ATTN: [guide title] Wiley Publishing, Inc. 111 River Street, 5th Floor Hoboken, NJ 07030.	
	http://www.fodors.com/contact-us/	Fodor's Travel Guides 1745 Broadway, 15 th Floor New York, NY 10019	(212) 572 -2313
	http://www.letsgo.com/about/contact-us	Let's Go Publications Inc. c/o [relevant guidebook] 67 Mt. Auburn St. Cambridge, MA 02138	+1 (617) 495 9659
	http://www.moon.com/contact	Avalon Travel 1700 Fourth Street Berkeley, California 94710	(510) 595-3664
	http://press.bradtguides.com/contact/	Nick Redmayne Bradt Travel Guides 23 High St. Chalfont St. Peter Bucks SL9 9QE, United Kingdom	+44 (0)1753 893444
	http://www.roughguides.com/website/aboutus/ContactUs/Default.aspx		United States (212) 414 3712 United Kingdom (020) 7010 3701


	http://www.lonelyplanet.com/contact/business_listing/new	pressusa@lonelyplanet.com 150 Linden Street Oakland, CA 94607-2538, USA tel: 510-893-8555 fax: 510-893-8563
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Table 6: Travel Guide Books

* Lonely Planet is the world's largest travel guidebook and provider of digital media. The website belongs to a network of over 600,000 travelers, mostly backpackers and adventure seeking tourists. Since 2007 Lonely Planet has defined themselves as the number one resource for travel guides among adventure tourists.

If mailing a formal letter review the following formatting guide.

- 1.) Make sure to include contact information
 - a. Company name, phone number, email address, website
 - b. Company background and brief description of services
 - c. If possible, send media kit to guidebook company

** Refer to media kit example under Media Relations*

- 2.) Follow up with a phone call after submission

Example of possible message,

Dear Editors,

I am contacting you with an inquiry on behalf of [company name]. We would like to inquire about the process of inclusion in any chapters or resource lists pertaining to sustainable, responsible, or ethical tourism in future editions of [guidebook name - destination]. Here is some background information on our organization: [List information outlined above]. Please direct us with the next steps for inclusion in your guidebooks; we would greatly appreciate it.

Figure 56: Letter Formatting Guide

Online Travel Reviews

These reviews are among some of the most influential sources for customers to obtain information. Reviews come from former or existing customers and clients that carry no bias towards a particular enterprise but give actual representations of customer satisfaction. As an enterprise, consumers look for portals to share information and give commentary. It is your responsibility that portals are available through all online resources.

Websites provide comprehensive information on your enterprise and services, news feeds and blogs. Fostering customer interaction in this way will help build a truthful image that consumers demand. Travel review websites will rate your enterprise and the customer experience. The most recognized travel review website is www.TripAdvisor.com. As the largest travel website, Trip Advisor offers real commentary and planning advice.

Social media avenues such as Twitter and Facebook will connect a wide network of your targeted audience. From a public relations perspective, social media can magnify your online presence with a single resilient idea. **Refer to Social Media Chapter*

Travel Fairs

These events are typically used to find additional distribution channels but fairs can also serve as a great way to gain publicity. Scheduling to showcase your product or service at travel fairs should be included in your PR timeline if your budget can support them. Travel shows and fairs are great opportunities to engage with partners, prospective clients and consumers and also competitors. Understanding the industry will help you project your message to larger audiences. For more information on how to utilize travel fairs and trade shows, **Please refer to Sales and Distribution Chapter.*

Merchandising

Although merchandise is traditionally used in advertising to increase sales volume, particular strategies can be adopted for the use of public relations. Information on developing and distributing merchandise for advertising is covered in more detail in *Sales and Distribution Chapter*. Particular merchandise can be developed for publicity efforts. Brochures, books, CDs and other items that highlight sustainable efforts and other acts of travel philanthropy are considered to be PR collateral unrelated to advertising.



In 2009, Hollywood celebrities and The Uganda Wildlife Authority launched a campaign using Facebook that allowed users in the largest social network platform to donate money and “friend a gorilla.” Connecting with various tourist boards, service suppliers, airlines and other tourism stakeholders, UWA was able to generate a monumental level of publicity that created major media buzz with entertainment companies like SONY, largely increased sales of tours volume but most importantly increased positive awareness to a point where significant positive change has been made. Visit www.friendagorilla.org to read more.

*“The campaign tagged ‘Friend-a-Gorilla’
has created the best international publicity
Uganda has ever had.”
- AllAfrica.com*

Figure 57: "Friend a Gorilla" Campaign

3.4 Creating Sales Alliances & Partnerships

Service Suppliers

All services suppliers are reservoirs for advertising. Just as an enterprise can effectively advertise via their different service suppliers, direct PR efforts in a manner that mimics advertising but translates the message of your enterprise rather than the particular services.

Transportation, local resources and attractions, and other ground service agents should be working collectively with your tourism enterprise. The tourism industry provides a diverse range of services that all mutually benefit each other. Thus, it is important to cultivate strong, lasting relationships with your partners and other allies. Service suppliers are another way to leverage your media and build publicity. Remember, in chapter section *Leveraging Media*, we discussed the importance of analyzing and repeating keywords and logos that best translate your image.

Tourism Tips!

Here are a few tips to help foster meaningful relationships with your partners and collectively increase the sustainable image:



- Host regular open houses and tours of your property, especially to community members
- Constantly add media contacts
- Invite members to serve on advisory committees operated by your enterprise
- Schedule luncheons for development updates and enterprise statistics
- Create many incentives to showcase sustainability
- Always offer yourself as a resource for sustainable travel education (journalists, NGOs, students, etc.)

Consumer Organizations

Such organizations can be very powerful publicity tools because they distribute a wide range of information perceived as independent. Such an organization brings in strong customer loyalty. These organizations are often membership based, which means participation is always voluntary. As a manager, participation in voluntary measures that promote responsible business can significantly enhance your image. Organizations such as Conservation International empower local governments, NGOs and private sector enterprises to practice sustainability. Conservation International uses strategies and partnerships to promote clean water, food, healthcare and biodiversity efforts worldwide. Linking with such organizations will not only give your enterprise access to such resources but also emphasize your dedication to sustainable tourism.

Destination Management Organizations / Tourism Boards

These are usually publically funded agencies that are membership based. Their function is to understand the impacts of tourism in specified regions and destinations and promote destinations for tourism enterprises and operators. A major role of DMOs is to identify environmental opportunities that promote sustainable tourism development. Many times, these organizations have the most success defining sustainable tourism to consumers because they are more about raising awareness than marketing products. Get involved with DMOs and Tourist boards surrounding your region; the free flow of information and resources they provide will generate a high appreciation for your services and expand your influences. It is possible such organizations are unaware of a unique practice or sustainable efforts your enterprise has accomplished, so get in contact, and let your voice be heard. **Refer to Leveraging Media for examples of DMOs and Tourist Boards.*

Awards Programs

In recent years, awards have become available to small enterprises along with traditional tourism industry giants. Also, criteria have become more sophisticated, making these awards more legitimate and generating large volumes of publicity. Below is a list of responsible tourism awards. **Refer back to figure 2 Wildfitness Press Page for an example of how to leverage your awards on your homepage.*

Award	Website	Contact	Description
Colibri Award	http://www.planeta.com/colibri.html	See Website	Award to a leading catalyst working toward ecotourism and responsible
Eco-Club	http://www.ecoclub.com/awards.html	See Website	Small awards for small tangible projects judged by dedicated responsible tourism readership
Ecotourism Spotlight Award	www.planeta.wikispaces.com/spotlight award	www2.planeta.com/contact/index.html	spotlights best website practices by government institutions <i>accepts applications</i>
Energy Globe Award	http://www.energyglobe.com/en/energy-globe-award/	ENERGY GLOBE Portal, Mühlbach 7A-4801 Traunkirchen Austria contact@energyglobe.info	Projects are showcased that conserve and protect our resources or that employ renewable energy
Indigenous Tourism and Biodiversity Website Awards	www.planeta.wikispaces.com/itbw	www2.planeta.com/contact/index.html	showcasing best practices in web-based technologies to help indigenous people manage tourism in a biodiversity friendly way <i>accepts applications</i>
Virgin Holidays Responsible Tourism Awards	www.responsibletravel.com/awards	awards@responsibletravel.com The Galleria Station Road Crawley West Sussex RH10 1WW	recognize individuals, companies and organizations in the travel industry that are making a significant commitment to the culture and economies of local communities and biodiversity conservation
Condé Nast Traveler	www.condenast.com	cntraveller@condenast.co.uk	Prestigious Ecotourism awards
Geotourism Challenge	http://geotourism.changemakers.com	See Website	High profile ecotourism competition sponsored by National Geographic and Ashoka Changemakers
TO DO! International Contest on Socially	http://www.to-do-contest.org/application. Html	info@studienkreis.org	The focus of the criteria of the TO DO! - Contest Socially Responsible Tourism is, among others, on the interests of the

Responsible Tourism			local population in the planning and implementation of tourism projects.
Wild Asia Responsible Tourism Award	http://www.wildasia.net/	See Website	Wild Asia's Responsible Tourism Awards aims to support the creation of sustainable destination in Asia.

Table 7: Tourism Awards Programs

Certification Schemes

Most often, certification schemes are voluntary initiatives that set standards for sustainable tourism. Although practiced by only 1% of the tourism industry, certificates hold high value for sustainable tourism enterprises. Any effort to excel beyond the baseline standards for sustainability will create appeal for your enterprise. Some sustainable tourism certificates are listed below.

Criteria/Certification Scheme	Description
Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria (GSTC)	A set of 37 voluntary standards that are the minimum baseline for qualifying as a sustainable tourism enterprise
Green Globe 21	Largest environmental benchmarking, certification and management solution offered currently for sustainable tourism
Rainforest Alliance	A SmartVoyager certificate offered to tour operators in Ecuador practicing sustainable and environmentally friendly initiatives
Sustainable Travel International STEP Program	Offer a variety of certificates and awards aligned with GSTC

Table 8: Certification Schemes

Events and Trip Donations

Often, free getaways or discounted travel packages are offered as promotional tools and should be implemented as a generous way to create awareness and buzz around your enterprise. However, as part of public relations campaign, be sure and use such opportunities to gain valuable credibility. Create packages and auctions that serve the purpose of promoting sustainability and educating the world about your industry. An example of this strategy would be starting a bid among high schools for a packaged trip and itinerary catered to the study of conserving biodiversity. Promote your package as a way to gain first hand educational experience and provide qualifications for selection such as environmental preservation projects and ideas.

Corporate Social Responsibility / Travel Philanthropy

As always such activities are not addressed enough. As a manager currently operating in the industry, it is important to understand the impact of corporate social responsibility. It is difficult to ask an emerging enterprise to sacrifice monetary objectives to make room for global philanthropy. However, charitable acts that ignite positive social change worldwide are what sustainable tourism hopes to accomplish within this new industry. The Center for Responsible Tourism has created the largest project for philanthropic travel initiatives. As part of their operations, they partner with public and private institutions and enterprises to address social inequalities worldwide using the sustainable tourism

industry as leverage. These types of relationships have potential to create long term viability of your enterprise within the industry. Whether or not the demand for sustainable tourism falls, there will always be a demand for social change. Partnering with organizations, such as Travel Philanthropy, will better associate your products and services with sustainability.

3.5 Crisis Management

Managing Bad Press

As a manager of a successful tourism enterprise, it is comforting to think that your enterprise will never face a serious disaster. However, different types of disasters have struck many tourism enterprises, and those who were capable of managing that crisis were able to survive. Types of disasters associated with tourism include but are not limited to:

- Natural disasters, such as earthquakes, floods, hurricanes, tropical storms, tsunamis, volcanoes and landslides
- Epidemics
- Technological and manmade disasters
- Violence or civil unrest

The ability to communicate your response in an event of any of these disasters will depend largely on how developed your crisis management and public relations tactics are. With so many resources available to the general public, encountering problems with the delivery of your message and press should not be completely unexpected. Even if acting responsibly and ethically, consumers can translate harsh misinterpretations and spread detrimental rumors. Responsibly, your enterprise should have a pre-constructed plan for dealing with such issues. Here are some general guidelines for designing a precautionary crisis management communications plan,:

- Begin early. There is no way to accurately predict such a crisis. Crisis management should be part of start-up operations.
- Organize a communications team. Generally, your communications team should represent all areas of your enterprise including PR, legal, insurance and management. Designate an official spokesperson of the enterprise.
- Research types of misimpressions and harmful press similar enterprises have encountered.
- Coordinate professional help. The high level of uncertainty associated with bad press often requires professional intervention, do not be afraid to seek help when needed and build these relationships early.
- Create access to emergency funds.

Remember that in any crisis situation it is absolutely necessary that governments, the media and all stakeholders are properly and fully informed of events as they occur as well as your enterprise's status .

3.6 Maintaining Your Campaign

Monitoring and Press Clippings

A good example of a way to monitor your publicity is to portfolio your press clippings. Press clippings are articles or short excerpts written in various articles of press. Collecting press clippings that mention your enterprise will allow you to analyze your growing presence in the press. Such a portfolio will also allow you to see what messages and themes are occurring most frequently in reference to your enterprise and industry. Reference your press clippings as they are received but also showcase them for clients, employees and partners to see. To preserve the hard copies, it is also wise to scan and save electronic copies of all clippings and back them up for future reference.

Evaluating Your Success

There is no system currently developed that uses a standardized method for evaluating marketing or publicity success. As a manager, you will need to adopt personalized methods and strategies for determining the success of your efforts. However, technology is alleviating some of the stress involved in making such evaluations. Earlier, methods were discussed regarding leveraging editorials. **Refer to section on Leveraging editorials for more information.*

Leveraging media and evaluating publicity are similar processes. Google Analytics is an innovative technology that can link editorial articles online directly on your website. For example, in January 2011, Jungle Bay Resorts was called “Top 20 trips in the world for 2011.” Google analytics provides data that shows how many users navigated through the Jungle Bay website originating from links attached to the National Geographic article. **Refer to Google analytics section of Website & Design for visitor tracking example.* Google alerts is also a free service that will send email updates to you every time Google reports additional news surrounding your specified term such as “sustainable tourism.” This source can be accessed at www.google.com/alerts.

Key indicators of public relations success also include,

1. Volume of travel reviews and editorial coverage
2. Value of the coverage: would it be of value if it were a paid advertising scheme?

Key Chapter Points

- Understand the positive and negative consequences of generating publicity.
- Create a PR plan that will illustrate and maintain a positive public image of your enterprise.
- Media outlets vary throughout newspapers, television, travel magazines, guide books and internet portals.
- Always have press toolkits readily available for reporters.
- Offer unique stories and ideas that compliment your product or service.
- Cultivate meaningful relationships and alliances within the industry.
- Your level of involvement with the public will determine the level of publicity you receive.

4. Customer Relationship Management

Overview:

Within this chapter, we will discuss:

- Key factors of great customer service
- How to be accessible to potential customers
- Customer service etiquette and tone
- Conflict prevention and resolution
- Client retention and relationship cultivation



4.1 Introduction

For most of this manual, you have been learning about developing and implementing a successful marketing strategy. However, no matter how much effort you put into marketing and PR, if you don't deliver quality customer service, you won't book or retain relationships with customers or travel industry partners. In this chapter we are going to discuss the key elements of providing good customer service, as well as ways to cultivate lasting relationships with past, present and future customers. As you will have read in the PR chapter, bad reviews spread much faster and are harder to blot out than even a stellar online review. However, providing great service from beginning to end and beyond is one of the surest ways to avoid negative PR, as well as boosting your reputation in the travel and tourism industry.

Furthermore, developing a loyal base of customers and travel industry partners is a fundamental way to maintain and drive sales. Professionalism and personalized service are things you and your staff can provide at little to no financial cost, and both will go a long way towards boosting your reputation and sales.

4.2 Key Elements of Good Customer Service

In this section we will look at what clients want and need to get them to your enterprise and keep them coming back for more. This closely related to Sales, and it makes sense; great service makes up the bulk of a great product, and people will respond. To make those sales and connections with Fully Independent Travelers and Travel Industry Intermediaries, your enterprise should strive to maintain these qualities:

Accessibility and Availability: You want to make sure that your enterprise is accessible to clients, providing them with clear contact information, and a straightforward booking process. You also need to be available; responding in a timely manner (24 hours or less) to inquiries and making your clients feel comfortable, knowing that there is someone they can reach should the need arise. We will discuss this in greater detail later in the chapter.

Honesty and Accuracy: Make sure that your website and promotional materials are up to date and accurate. This includes everything from contact information to product offerings and costs. **DO NOT EXAGGERATE ABOUT WHAT YOU OFFER AND DO NOT OVERPROMISE.** Don't tell clients what you think they want to hear if it's not the truth. Be honest and there won't be any disappointing surprises when they arrive.

Reliability and Consistency: You and your team want to deliver a consistently high-quality product. This will help you build and cement a good reputation, which will attract the attention of FITs and Tour Operators and Agents. This is especially important in building relationships with Intermediaries, as Operators and Agents will not offer a product whose quality they cannot guarantee.

Part of developing that consistent quality is through having an organized operation. This means working with your team to ensure that your offerings are do-able. For example, if you are running a tour, you need to make sure that it can be completed in the advertised time and that you have all of the logistics worked out beforehand with your team and suppliers. Test your products thoroughly before offering them. This allows you and your team to smooth out any bumps before it is sold to a client.

Attitude and Flexibility: Remember, you want more customers! Be aware of your tone and attitude when dealing with customers. Be nice and empathetic. Develop a friendly and engaged rapport. Also, be flexible—not every one of your customers will be the same. Each will have different needs and you should be prepared (and willing) to handle all sorts. *See more on this later in the chapter.*

What does it mean to be a Reputable Enterprise?

When FITs and Travel and Tourism Intermediaries are deciding with which enterprises they want to do business, Reputability is a major factor that they take into consideration. There are some steps you need to take in order to establish your enterprise's reputation, all of which are grounded in good customer service. Here are some ways to become a reputable enterprise:

- Guidebook Inclusion—guidebooks are seen as objective information regarding a destination. Authors often travel undercover and only include their favorite enterprises that provided the best experiences. See the PR chapter to learn more about guidebook inclusion

- Trade industry organization memberships—for example, a scuba diving center that is a PADI member lets everyone know that their business upholds all the quality and safety standards of the diving industry, by having that membership and endorsement. There are all sorts of travel and tourism-related organizations out there. Look for ones relevant to your enterprise and start making those connections!
- Clean health and safety record—this is absolutely part of good customer service. Your enterprise needs to follow all the industry standards for health and safety. Joining an industry-related organization oftentimes gives you all the information regarding health and safety, as well as resources to help your enterprise improve
- Good Reviews and Word of Mouth—more than ever before, people are looking to online reviews and the recommendations of friends before booking anything. Good reviews come from positive experiences that people want to share, and the more you accumulate, the more solid your reputation will become.

Putting what you learn in this chapter to use will help you to establish this reputability that will open up distribution channels and drive sales.

4.3 Accessibility

The first part of developing a smart customer service policy is making sure that your enterprise is accessible to both the Fully Independent Traveler (FIT) and Travel industry intermediaries, for example Tour Operators and Travel Agents. If they cannot easily contact your enterprise, then potential customers and clients will move on to somewhere else. However, this is easily preventable! Depending on the resources available to you, there are some standard channels of communication you can use:

Email Address

Make sure you have a business email address for your enterprise. Use an address that sounds professional and related to your enterprise (for example: info@undiscovered.travel). Another option is to embed an inquiry form to your Contacts page that will be forwarded to your email address. These forms can be tailored so that you can learn about a potential client's travel preferences and background before responding to them. You can have your web developer help you to set up an inquiry form on your website.

Instant messaging with Skype, AIM, or MSN

Instant messaging is a great option to use if you or members of your staff can be available online during the day. Instant messaging is a free way to communicate with clients in real time, so they don't have to wait for an email response when making inquiries. This is less expensive option for clients than making an expensive long distance phone call. Keep in mind though, that you should decide on hours of availability, list those hours on your website next to your username and make sure a member of staff is responsible for being online and available during those hours. There are other instant messaging platforms such as Facebook, gchat and yahoo messenger that are worth looking into. You may already use one socially and know which ones you prefer. Downloading Skype, AIM, or MSN is free and easy; just go to their respective websites to learn more:

www.skype.com, www.msn.com, www.aim.com

Tourism Tip!

Just as with your enterprises' email address, pick a username that sounds professional and related to your enterprise.



Telephone

Do your best to get a reliable phone number. If your enterprise is in an area with landlines, then take advantage and get set up with the local phone service. If you are in an area without reliable landlines, then invest in a mobile phone. Look into payment plans and if the only option is pay-as-you-go, then keep track of your phone credit and make sure you always have enough! Also—keep track of your mobile phone so you don't lose it! Once you have a phone number, you want to keep that number. Constantly changing your number means you will lose contacts when they can't reach you because they have the wrong phone number. It might be a good idea for you to have one or two mobile numbers depending on the reliability of phone service in your area. It's always good to have a backup, making your enterprise as accessible as possible.

Contact Information Checklist

- ✓ Email address
- ✓ Instant messenger username
- ✓ Skype username
- ✓ Phone number
- ✓ Inquiry form
- ✓ Business hours

Figure 58: Contact Information Checklist

Tourism Tip!

Remember to list your **WHOLE** phone number. This means listing your country and area codes for international callers. *Example: +1 (202) 555-6192 USA*



Another great option for phone use is Skype. Not only does it offer instant messaging service, but it is also a reliable Internet phone service. This means that when signed onto Skype, with a headset w/microphone plugged into your computer, you can have free phone calls with other Skype members. Skype also offers call forwarding and “Skype-out” calling. Call forwarding is a great option for your enterprise if you are working with an international clientele. They call your Skype account and it will be forwarded to your telephone, meaning that your clients do not need to pay for expensive long distance calls. With Skype-out, it’s a similar process, where you can call phone numbers using your Skype account, and it is often much more affordable than traditional long distance calling. All of the information on how to use Skype can be found on their website.

As with instant messaging, remember to decide on, then clearly list your hours of availability next to your contact information.

Tourism Tip!

Don’t forget to set up your voicemail with a clear message asking for full name, date, time, phone number and the best time to call back.



4.4 Responding to Inquiries

Once you have your contact information set up on your website and social media outlets, you will be ready to communicate with the rest of the travel industry. First and foremost, all of your inquiries, whether from new or established clients, need to be responded to in a **TIMELY MANNER**. This means **no later than 24 hours** from the time you receive an inquiry. FITs will normally contact multiple enterprises when researching and planning a trip. A quick response shows professionalism and reliability. This goes for Intermediaries as well. Agents and Operators need to feel confident in your service as they are entrusting you with their clients. Being prompt in your responses shows that your enterprise is organized. Furthermore, if one of your competitors responds before you, there is a good chance you will lose that business.

How you respond is also important. When corresponding with clients keep the tone and style of your responses professional, yet welcoming. Avoid being overly familiar, using abbreviations, slang and sloppy grammar. Check your responses for spelling errors and typos before sending off an email. With instant messaging, keep the same light but professional tone.

When responding to inquiries ask questions, be engaged, and repeat client requests back to them to confirm that you understood correctly.

Email responses to inquiries should include the following:

- Thank client for their interest in your destination and enterprise
- Briefly explain who you are and describe the type of services provide
- Briefly detail how you operate including: when client may expect a quote, how reservations are processed, your methods of payment and any other relevant information.
- Ask the necessary questions needed to better profile the client and request.
- Reservations Manager contact details

When speaking on the phone or Skype, answer calls in this manner:

“Good [morning, afternoon, evening]! Thank you for calling [name of your enterprise], my name is [your name]. How may I help you today?”

Continue your conversation in a friendly and helpful tone of voice, and as with email responses, ask any relevant questions to learn as much as possible about the client, and explain as much as you can about your enterprise. You may also ask for an email address and if it is ok to contact the client via email. If he/she agrees then you can follow up your phone conversation with an email.

Efficient Follow-up

Follow-up is an important part of customer service that helps to secure sales and strengthen relationships with your clients. It’s a chance for you to learn more about a client and gauge their interest as well as showing the client that you value their business. Here are some guidelines for efficient follow-up throughout the sales process:

During the Sales Process—send a follow-up email thanking the client for their interest and provide them with any information that still needs to be covered. End your email by letting them know you are awaiting their response to complete the booking process, and thanking them for their interest in your enterprise.

After the Sale is complete—send an email confirming the reservations. Offer to answer any questions they might have leading up to their trip. This is also a good opportunity for you to invite the client to “like” you on Facebook, where they can see all of your interesting content before they leave for their vacation

After the trip is complete—send an email thanking the client for patronizing your enterprise. This is another opportunity for you to invite them to follow on your social media outlets and to participate on them by posting photos, articles or stories about their experiences. If you haven’t done so already, this is also a chance to ask for feedback and any suggestions they might have towards improving your service—especially before they broadcast any grievances on TripAdvisor!

Figure 59: Efficient Email Etiquette

4.5 Conflict Prevention and Resolution

Keeping to the characteristics above will go a long way towards conflict prevention, but here are some more ways to keep clients happy and minimize the chances of getting negative reviews or losing relationships with travel industry intermediaries.

Prevention

First off, you should be organized in your operations, using a reliable reservations system to avoid overbooking. When corresponding with clients, you need to be clear about availability, costs, payment methods and payment due dates. Consult with a Lawyer to draft a booking agreement that works for your enterprise (see an attached example in the Annex). Booking agreements are extremely helpful for both you and your clients as they protect you both, and leave little room for misunderstandings that could turn nasty.

Additionally, (and this is especially important if your enterprises deals in any types of tours or activity) you should having all clients sign appropriate liability releases and medical forms that are suitable to your activities offered and applicable to the laws in your jurisdiction. These are used to protect you and your enterprise from being held liable in the case of an accident. Having the client take responsibility for themselves and their actions protects your assets and reputation. (This does not include gross negligent behavior or bad judgment on the part of your enterprise.)

Research relevant trade organizations your enterprise can join that would have relevant liability forms (like Professional Association of Dive Instructors, which would be good for a dive center). These forms also show that your enterprise is organized and takes safety seriously. As with the booking agreement, *consult a lawyer!*

It is stated above, but it bears repeating. You and your team need to be empathetic! This means being aware of your customers' needs and emotions. Be accommodating and treat your customers with personalized attention. Address any potential problems *before* they happen, like accommodating strict dietary requirements a customer might have. These are the types of things that make customers feel special and taken care of—you are able to take what could have been a problem and turn it to your advantage. This is where attitude and flexibility really come into play. Having that awareness of and ability to anticipate your clients' needs, along with your willingness and flexibility to support those needs, will set your enterprise apart from the competition. It will also make intermediaries much more comfortable in partnering with your enterprise and selling your product. Read through reviews on Trip Advisor of enterprises similar to yours; you will see this type of attentive and personal service mentioned over and over in positive reviews.

Resolution

When dealing with complaints be professional and attempt to find a solution that will satisfy your client. Remember, part of being a reliable enterprise is being accountable. Try to solve problems as soon as possible—if your customer goes home unhappy, you can bet they will post a negative review. This is another reason why being empathetic is so important; to solve any potential issues as soon as they become apparent.

In the case of negative reviews, keep up with sites like Trip Advisor so you can address those problems the future. By being aware of what's being written about your enterprise online allows you to prevent

your team from being caught off guard if a new client asks about a negative review. Get in touch with the unhappy customer, apologize and attempt to resolve the issue. This kind of engagement with customers, happy or no, shows that you do care and are trying to provide good customer service.

And lastly, follow up your services with a customer feedback survey at the end of their experience with your enterprise. This shows that you care about providing great service, but also allows you to address any negative feedback before it makes it to the Internet.

4.6 Cultivating Relationships with your Customers

Developing relationships with your customers that last beyond their experiences with your enterprise encourages brand loyalty and makes it more likely that these customers will either return again, and/or spread the word about how much they love your enterprise. It only takes some time and organization to interact with your customers, and costs next to nothing, but it is one of the best ways to establish a good reputation, as well as securing future sales. This is a chance for you and your team to get creative, but here are a few ways in which you can start:

- Follow up with customers online after their experience with your enterprise. You can start with a nice email and encourage them to interact with your enterprise on your social media outlets like Facebook and Trip Advisor. Ask them to post their photos and write about their experiences. Thank them for their business.
- Set up a quarterly newsletter to send via email. A newsletter is a great way to stay connected with customers and partners as it keeps you in touch, and allows you to tell them all the great things you've been up to, maybe inspiring their next vacation.
- Send birthday postcards or emails
- Over the winter holidays send greeting cards or emails

Tourism Tip!

Keep profiles of your customers and clients so that you can keep track of their background and interests. This will allow you to send targeted promotions and newsletters, as well as helping you to recall the personal details of a returning customer the next time they contact you.



In the Social Media chapter you will find more ways to use social media as a tool to interact with all of your customers and partners.

See the Annex for some examples of the above suggestions.

4.7 Organizational Tools

Keeping track of all of your customers, partners like travel agents and tour operators, your inquiries and your actual bookings can sound like a daunting task, but its manageable once you organize yourself with the right tools. Computers nowadays have built-in address books and calendars that you can use together to keep track of all your bookings and contacts. If you use a PC then Microsoft Office has Outlook that syncs your contacts, calendar and emails. Macs run on their own software with built in address books and calendars that you can sync to your email as well. Another option, if you have reliable access to Internet, or as a way to back up all your contacts on your computer, is to use an online organizing tool. You can access these by setting up an email address with Google, Yahoo or Hotmail/MSN. All of these options provide you with organizational tools that allow you to create multiple groups of contacts, keep track of your emails, and sync them to your calendars.

Creating Contacts

Keeping track of all of your contacts is vitally important to your enterprise. For each contact you have the chance to list all relevant information, which allows you to recall customers even from a few years back, as well as keep track of your different business partners like DMOs or travel agents.

Here is an example a standard form to fill out for a new contact. This image is from Gmail, but you will find a similar format with most other systems.

The screenshot displays the Gmail 'Add Contact' form. On the left, a sidebar shows 'My Contacts' with 0 contacts, 'All Contacts' with 9, and 'Most Contacted' with 4. The main form area has a 'Search contacts' bar at the top. Below it, there are 'Save' and 'Cancel' buttons. The form fields include: 'Name' (text input), 'Title' and 'Company' (text inputs), 'Email' (text input with a 'Home' dropdown), 'Phone' (text input with a 'Mobile' dropdown), 'Address' (text input with a 'Home' dropdown), 'Website' (text input with a 'Home' dropdown), 'Birthday' (date pickers), and 'Notes' (a large text area). There is also an 'Add' button at the bottom of the form.

Figure 60: Gmail - Creating Contacts

You can see that you may list all the relevant contact information, along with the person's title and company (important for business contacts) birthday, and notes—which is where you can list special interests of or facts about a client.

You also have the opportunity to divide your contact lists into groups. This makes it easy to find the addresses you need when writing a specialized email or newsletter. For example, “Business Partners”, “Family Travel”, “Singles”, “Hikers”, etc.

Outlook, Mac, Gmail, etc all have thorough and easy to understand “help” sections that can guide you through the process of setting up your organizational tool of choice. Gmail has a clearly laid out website with step-by-step instructions at: <http://mail.google.com/support/>

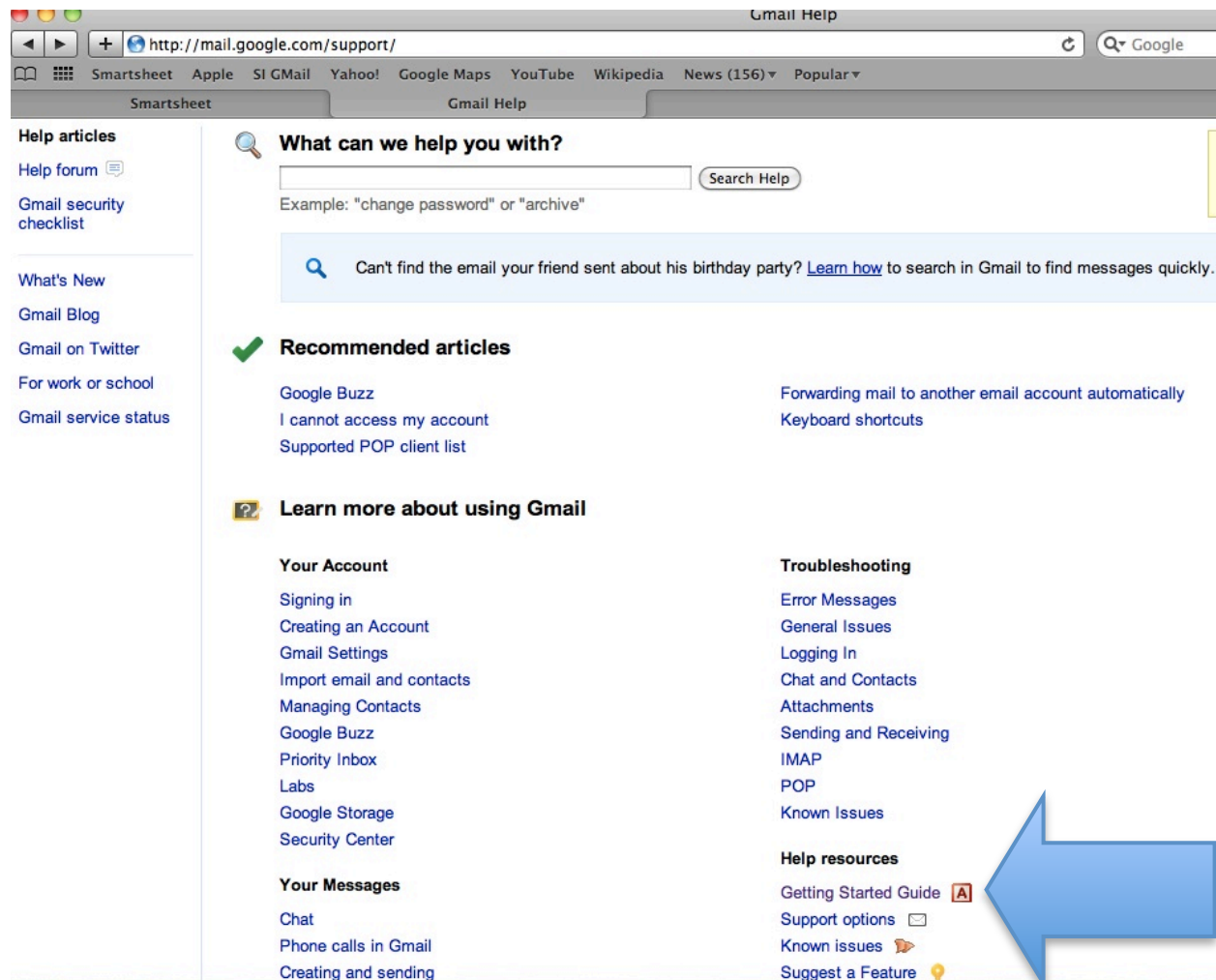


Figure 61: Gmail - Getting Started

5. Sales and Distribution

Overview

In this chapter we will discuss

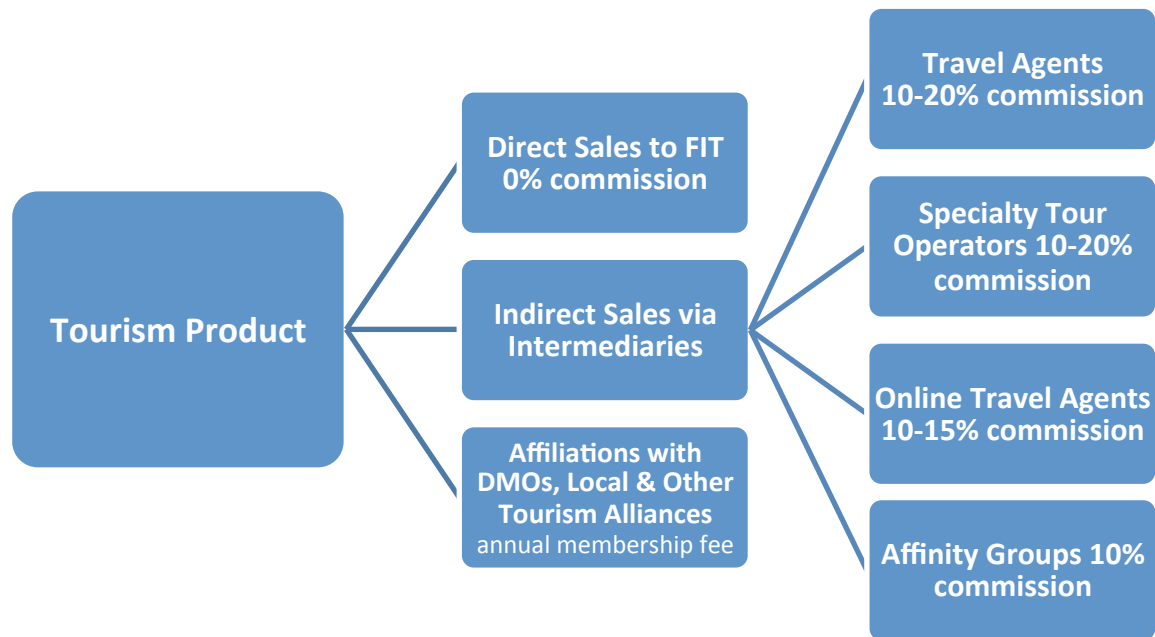
- The various distribution channels for your product
- How to reach out to Fully Independent Travelers (FIT)
- How to reach out Travel Industry Intermediaries
- Monitoring and Evaluation Tactics



5.1 Introduction

As you probably already know, the goal of all your marketing efforts is to increase the sales and exposure of your product. It is important that you try to utilize a diverse range of sales and distribution channels in order to keep your sales steady and growing. Focusing all of your energies on one venue will limit your audience and also rely too much on one source for all of your sales—you don't want to put all your eggs in one basket. When deciding which distribution channels you want to pursue, you need to take your target market into account. Spreading your enterprise too thin could compromise its quality and make it difficult to keep track of all your partnerships. To avoid this, pick a few different distribution options that cater to your target market. As part of your overall Sales and Marketing Strategy, you should have done some research to find out who your target market is. It is a waste of money and energy to market to people who won't be responsive. Decide who you want your target market to be, and if you are already reaching them, or if you have a distinct target market already. Once you have this information, come up with some measurable sales and distribution goals. By tracking your sales and distribution progress alongside your goals will help you to figure out which distribution channels and marketing techniques are the most effective for your enterprise.

5.2 Overview of Distribution Channels



Direct Sales to Fully Independent Traveler (0% commission)

One of the most straightforward ways to sell your product is by selling it directly to the Fully Independent Traveler (FIT). This means that FITs get in contact with your enterprise directly to buy your product without any middlemen. FITs like to research and take control of their own trip planning and booking. They are oftentimes more adventurous, willing to explore or try something new. If you are a newer enterprise still building a reputation, you will probably rely on FITs for most of your sales and their word of mouth before working with any intermediaries. Selling your product directly to FITs means that there is no commission, but should not be your only distribution strategy as it also means you are reaching a smaller audience and are not receiving the marketing and sales support you get when partnering with a travel trade intermediary.

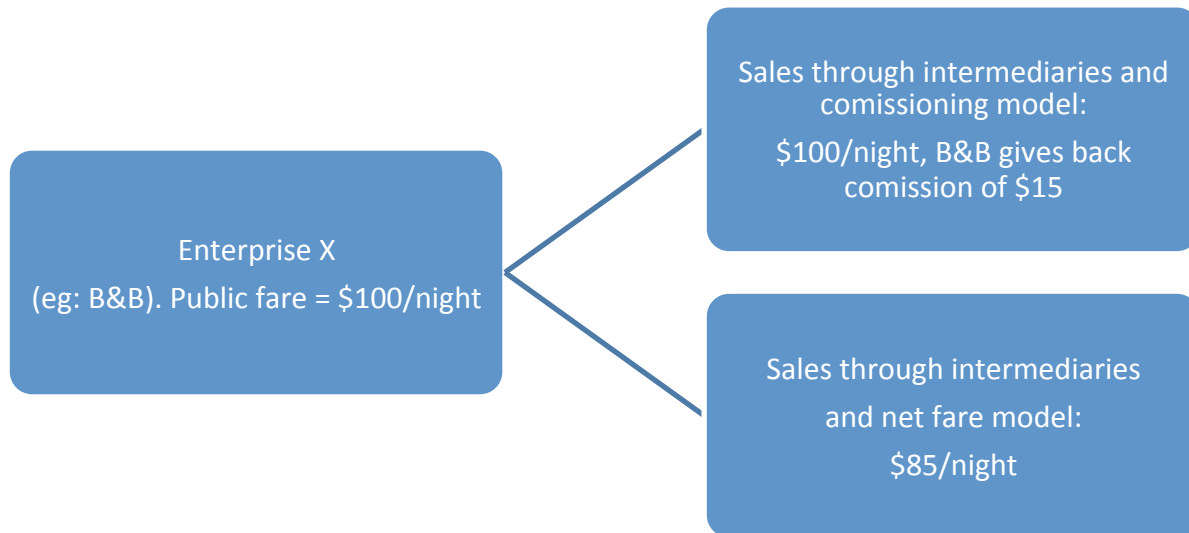
Indirect Sales via Intermediaries (Travel Trade, 10-30% commission)

Intermediaries in the travel and tourism industry are Travel Agents (TAs), Tour Operators (TOs), Online Travel Agencies (OTAs), Affinity groups and other group organizations. Intermediaries make their money through commission earned on selling tourism products from other enterprises.

It will be up to you, as manager of your enterprise to decide whether you want to use a commissioning model with intermediaries or net fares. These are usually the two types of agreements that are used within the industry.

To make it easier to understand how both models work, let's think of the case of a B&B enterprise that has a public fare (the one published for FIT's) of \$100 per night. If this enterprise decides to implement a commissioning model with its intermediaries, and let's say the usual in this market is a 15% commission to tour operators, the enterprise will charge the indirect clients \$100 but will return back \$15, corresponding to 15%.

On the other hand, if the B&B decides to negotiate with its intermediaries a model of net fares, the B&B will only charge the \$85 to the client and will not be commissioning anything else on those transactions.



It might seem a lot easier to use the net fare model than commissioning, however if you decide you are going to use this type of pricing, you have to be very careful and pay attention to respect at all times both channels (direct and indirect) and have the accurate information for each client.

While commissioning, you can promote and advertise your products/services and include prices regardless of who is the audience, at the end, everyone is paying the same, and you will just return the equivalent to the commission to the indirect sales. However, this will not be the case if you are using net fares with indirect sales. You will need to have different information available on your different promotion channels (online, collateral materials, social media, etc) both for FIT's and for intermediaries.

On the intermediary side, they might prefer one type of pricing or the other. Having a net fare agreement will give a tour operator some more flexibility to accommodate its prices in order to be competitive. For example, a tour operator might decide that in order to gain more market share they need to mark up its services only in 10%. In this case, if you give them the \$85 price, the tour operator will be able to increase that fare on 10% and have a more competitive price than if you just give them the \$100 price with a 15% commission. Net fares are also easier and faster to log for accounting purposes. Both parts will get rid of accounts payable and receivable transactions since once services are paid to you, the transaction is over.

It is important to mention that you don't have to use one method or the other. You can combine and use both methods according to the client, its preferences and the type of agreement you have with them (e.g.: increased commissions for larger reservations). Using both methods can make it more complicated for you to track and do the pricing of your products/services. The best way to go would be to choose only one method; look first what works better for you and for your main customers to decide so, but be flexible: there might be opportunities where offering both types of agreements will result into more business and revenues for your enterprise.

Further considerations must be done when working with intermediaries regarding pricing, such as your capacity to negotiate allotment agreements, or not. As a definition, allotments in the tourism industry are used to designate a certain block of pre-negotiated carrier seats or hotel rooms which have been

bought out and held by a travel organizer with a huge buying power like a wholesaler, tour operator or hotel consolidator, and more rarely by a retail travel agent. According to this, it is possible that some of your intermediary clients would ask or propose you to do an allotment agreement. Because it is risky for you because it can end up happening that at last minute you will have available seats or rooms that will not be sold, you need to make sure first, that you have done business before with the other part, that you know them and understand that they have the capacity to generate such amount of bookings for that date. Also, you need to understand if you, as a business, can afford to get involved in these types of agreements; the other part will be requesting a lower than usual rate and as already explained, you are taking the risk that at last minute you end up with a high inventory of unsold services.

If you decide to go for it, make sure to take into consideration all items of the agreement such as: how many seats, rooms, services are being allotted, what is the discount you will give to the intermediary, payment methods, and most importantly the release back date, which is the date when the tour operator will let you know how many reservations have been made and how many units will be available for you to sell.

Travel Agents	Usually specialize in certain regions or interests, and travelers hire them for their expertise as well as to take care of all the trip logistics from beginning to end. Partnering with a Travel Agent means that they will market and sell your product as part of travel packages that they design for their clients. Travel agents may purchase the package direct from the provider, or from wholesale tour operators.
Tour Operators	Are similar to travel agents except that they specialize in running packaged tours. Partnering with a tour operator means that they will include your enterprise as part of an overall tour.
Affinity Groups	Are travel groups that are made up of travelers with a common interest or background. The types of tours that affinity groups organize are just as varied as the affinity groups themselves—for example an operator that specializes in trips for the over-50 crowd. Joining an affinity group for travel appeals to many because they know they will be in a tour with people similar to themselves. A retired couple may want to go on a tour of the Galapagos, but they don't want to be the only mature couple among a bunch of 20-somethings. Other group organizations may specialize in a certain interest or theme, like an affinity group, except it may be less about the people on the tour than of what the tour consists. For example, specialized birding tours of the Amazon.
Online Travel Agencies	Appeal to the FIT as a reliable way to book a product. Usually OTAs have a broad reach across the Internet and market themselves as having the best travel deals available. Rather than curating an entire trip and ensuring its quality, OTAs offer one-stop shopping, where FITs can book all of their own travel needs, or choose a special package deal that the OTA has put together. Some of the more popular OTAs are Expedia.com and Travelocity.com.

Figure 62: Travel Industry Intermediaries

When partnering with these intermediaries, it is important to remember that because they will be marketing and selling your product, they expect to receive a wholesale price that is less than what your enterprise is charging on an individual basis to FITs. Additionally, you will most likely have to set aside room (or tour space) allotments that put you at risk of having unsold inventory at the last minute. Before agreeing to set aside inventory for an intermediary, you'll need to make sure that they have the

ability to fill those spaces. Furthermore, because each of these intermediaries is accountable for the quality of the products they are selling to their clients, they won't partner with an enterprise whose quality cannot be guaranteed. It takes time to cultivate relationships with intermediaries, but once you do they will become reliable sources for selling and marketing your enterprise.

Affiliations with DMOs, Local and Other Tourism/Trade Alliances

DMO stands for "Destination Management Organization." DMOs are composed of multiple tourism-based enterprises, each of which pays an annual membership fee that goes towards the overall marketing efforts to promote that destination. Membership fees are usually based on the type and size of an enterprise; for example, a hotel with 20+ rooms will pay more than a B&B with 10 rooms.

These are some of the many benefits your enterprise will receive by joining a DMO:

- Publicity on the DMO's website
- Distribution of your enterprise's promotional materials
- Market linkages with international tour operators
- Inclusion in sales directories
- Opportunities to be included in trade shows and FAM trips
- Access to up-to-date market research
- Special distinction and added reputability for your enterprise

Joining your local and national DMOs is a fairly simple process; usually it just takes an email or phone call where you express your interest in becoming a member, and someone at the DMO will guide you through the process. DMOs are there to support the tourism enterprises in their destinations, and are funded on membership fees, so it is in their interest to help your enterprise.

Your enterprise can also join other trade organizations that are specific to your enterprise. For example, PADI (Professional Association of Dive Instructors) is a membership organization for the scuba diving industry and has their International Resort and Retailers Association for dive-related enterprises. These types of trade organizations have annual membership fees similar to DMOs, and provide your enterprise with another layer of reputability in addition to their business and marketing support.

5.3 FIT Outreach Tactics

Signage and Curb Appeal

Signage is a strong point for attracting the FIT. If no one knows you are there, or can't find you, then you are not going to get their business. At your enterprise, check to see how visible you actually are. This goes hand in hand with curb appeal. Curb appeal means that your enterprise is visually pleasing from the outside, and that it looks welcoming and intriguing enough for passerby to want to stop in and see what's inside. Depending on the location of your enterprise, curb appeal and good signage will draw in FITs exploring the area. Here are some questions to ask about your signage and curb appeal:

- Is it obvious from the street that your enterprise is there?
- Is there any indication of what your enterprise offers?
- If you are off the beaten path, do you have ample signage in the surrounding area, and clear signs to lead the way to your enterprise?
- Is the front of your enterprise swept and clean?
- Is the paint peeling or dirty
- If you have a display window, is there anything displayed in it to attract passerby?
- Does it look welcoming and like a place you would want to enter?

Your enterprise's sign should match your logo and brand; make sure it looks professional and visually pleasing. When attracting customers first impressions count! Put in the effort to spruce up your façade cosmetically and see the increase in your foot traffic.

Print Collateral Placement

In the PR chapter we discussed the creation of print materials and how they are a great way to promote your enterprise. Here we will discuss using them to grab the attention of the FIT. Come up with a distribution and replenishment plan for your print promotional materials. The creation of your print collateral comes out of your overall marketing budget, so you need to determine how much you are able to spend, taking into account the number of venues where you can display your print collateral, as well as how often you will need to replenish your stock. There are many different places where you can display your print collateral. Here are a few options:

- Local tourism information center
- Partner enterprises (ones who are not your competition!)
- Your headquarters
- Local tour operators and inbound operators' offices
- Local community members

Online Distribution

The majority of FITs plans and books their trips using the Internet. FITs like the convenience of booking online and so while you may put lots of effort into your online marketing strategy, if you can, it will help immensely to provide FITs with an easy Online Travel Agency (OTA) through which they can book your product—translating your marketing efforts directly into sales. Online Travel Agencies are unique in that they help to promote your product, but additionally provide the means for travelers to make reservations instantly. There are many different OTAs, each of them organized a little differently. As with other Intermediaries, OTAs usually charge a commission of 10-15% on bookings. However, unlike smaller Travel Agents and Tour Operators, OTAs reach a wider, albeit less targeted audience.

Additionally, OTAs, while still having basic standards expected of their Suppliers (that's your enterprise), they don't usually have the same requirements as specialized TAs. That makes OTAs a good option for your enterprise as you build your reputation through FITs. Two of the biggest OTAs are Expedia and Hostelworld.

Expedia:

Expedia is the largest online travel agency, with options for an FIT to book everything from flights, ground transportation, hotels and activities. Expedia is free to join, and then takes commission on bookings made through their site.



As the largest online travel agency, Expedia, Inc. includes multiple other online travel agencies, some of which have more targeted audiences (Hotels.com, venere.com). Getting your enterprise listed is a straightforward process. Go to www.joinexpedia.com if your enterprise offers accommodation, and there you can click "apply now" or "contact me" and Expedia will take you through the benefits, steps and requirements of partnering with them. Expedia also offers booking services for all types of travel vendors, including attractions and services. You can fill out the form to get listed at this link: http://www.expedia.com/daily/home/vendor/dest_svc_form.asp and then Expedia will contact you will more information and take you through the process of getting listed. Expedia's "Vendor Frequently Asked Questions" webpage has comprehensive and clear information to help any type of travel-related enterprise get started on partnering with Expedia: <http://www.expedia.com/daily/home/vendor/default.asp> See the Annex for more information on working with Expedia.

Hostelworld:

Hostelworld started as an online booking tool for hostels, and is now one of the most popular online travel agencies for FITs.



Hostelworld has expanded to become a comprehensive trip planning and social networking site offering mobile travel guides, accommodation booking, activity booking, interactive maps, blogs and more. Hostelworld is a great place to begin with your expansion into the world of online distribution as they are free to join, have few, easy-to-meet requirements and offer a great platform for your enterprise to get exposure and make sales. Even though it is called "hostelworld," all sorts of accommodation are featured. Getting your enterprise listed on hostelworld is straightforward. For accommodation, go to <http://www.hostelworld.com/signup.php> and fill out the information. Hostelworld will show you their Terms of Agreement, which you can see for yourself in the Annex. For tours and activities, go to http://www.hostelworld.com/signup_tours.php Fill out the information requested and a Hostelworld representative will contact your enterprise to further discuss your distribution on the site.

Considerations

While partnering with an OTA can be extremely beneficial for your enterprise in getting exposure and generating sales, but it is important to make sure that your enterprise can fulfill all the requirements of an agreement with an OTA. Look for OTAs that cater to your target market. This way you will be spared the effort and expense of pursuing an OTA that doesn't deliver on sales, or is selling something different than what you offer (i.e.—don't join an OTA that specializes in luxury resorts if you are a rustic campsite). Furthermore, OTAs expect that your enterprise will always make a certain amount of space available to them at all times, for example, if you are a hotel, Expedia expects that they will always have at least 10 rooms that they can sell. You need to make sure that you can provide on your end and afford the 10-15% (or more!) commission that goes to an Online Travel Agency.

Postcards

Your enterprise can use postcard mailings as a way to reach out to FITs directly. You can send postcards out to past customers, with targeted cards highlighting special deals and promotions, or you can purchase targeted mailing lists (like for specific zip codes, where you want to attract new customers, or where most of you know most of your customer base lives). You need to take your overall marketing budget into consideration, deciding how many postcards you can afford to print and mail, as well as how often you want to send out postcards (for example, you might time it for the winter holidays, and have the focus be a “happy holidays from ____”).

Consumer Travel Shows & Events

Travel Trade shows are another way of making connections with FITs. Usually these trade shows are aimed at the travel and tourism industry as a way for industry stakeholders (like your enterprise) to network and make connections with other members of the industry (a great way to meet intermediaries, as you will read later in the chapter). Some trade shows are open to the public for one or two days, giving you a chance to interact with FITs directly. For the most part, your interaction with FITs at a trade show will be more about marketing and making connections, rather than making any sales. Attendance at Trade shows is expensive and time consuming, so before committing to any, it's important to research and plan ahead, making an overall travel tradeshow strategy. DMOs usually organize booths at travel trade shows, and by being a member, your enterprise has the opportunity to be featured in the booth, or in promotional materials, depending on how much money you contribute. Depending on your budget, attending trade shows alone might be too costly and it may make more sense for you to join your DMO. We will discuss the details of researching, planning and attending tradeshow later in the chapter. For now, let's discuss how to use trade shows as a tool for your enterprise to reach out the FIT.

Some Travel Show Activity Ideas

- Cooking Demonstration for a traditional food from your destination, and samples for the public to taste
- Dress up box with traditional clothes from your destination that people can try on and pose for photos
- Polaroid or digital camera with printer and fun backgrounds set up where people can pose for photos
- Raffles where people can sign up to win trips and prizes
- Viewfinders with 3D images of your enterprise and destination that people can play with.

Figure 63: Travel Trade Show Activity Ideas

Decide on tangible goals for your FIT outreach at travel shows, for example, signing up 100+ FITs to your mailing list. Decide who from your team will be responsible for attending and interacting with FITs on those days where shows are open to the public. Put together promotional materials that are specifically made for FITs and not industry Intermediaries. This means that prices on sell sheets will be higher than the prices you offer to intermediaries. You are also marketing a different side of your business when interacting with FITs—for FITs you are trying to attract them to come to your enterprise, vs. Intermediaries who you want to have sell and feature your enterprise within their tours and packages.

Tourism Tip!

Have some fun activities planned for the public days at travel shows, where people can engage in your offerings besides picking up another brochure



Merchandising

Part of your overall marketing strategy is to establish a brand and a logo for your enterprise. Once you have these, you can begin to develop merchandise that will broadcast your brand and logo to a wider audience. Selling merchandise also brings your enterprise a new stream of income. Think about your target market and products they would purchase. For example, an enterprise specializing in watersports can sell branded dry bags, which customers like because they can keep their personal belongings secure and dry while out on the water. Remember to take into consideration what your budget is, how easily you can order and receive stock, and how often you'll need to replenish your stock.

Merchandise Suggestions

- T-shirts
- Baseball Hats
- Wide-brim Hats
- Canvas Bags/
Reusable Bags
- Bumper Stickers
- Key Chains
- Postcards
- Fridge Magnets
- Water Bottles

Guerilla Marketing

Guerilla marketing tactics can be a low-cost way for you to generate buzz and attract independent travelers, especially ones already near or in your region. We discussed the distribution of your print materials like posters, fliers and brochures. Getting these displayed in your region and surrounding areas is one type of guerilla marketing. Devising guerilla-marketing campaigns can be a chance for you and your team to get creative and experiment. Reach out to the local community and tourism stakeholders; offer discounts in exchange for feedback and for their promotion of your enterprise through word of mouth. For example, a local dive shop offers 30% off diving to the rock climbing instructors at a neighboring climbing operator, who in exchange offer 30% off climbing to dive staff, both enterprises recommend and spread the word about each other, helping both to generate buzz and bring in new customers.

Another idea is to hold parties or pub quiz/games nights at a local restaurant or bar, where you can promote your enterprise and offer prizes. Events like these will bring in tourists who are looking for evening activities, and get the word out about your enterprise.

Merchandising ties into guerilla-marketing as well. Having people wear or carry around branded merchandise can generate buzz. A great example is the "Tubing the Vang Vieng, Laos" t-shirts that are now ubiquitous amongst the backpackers on the banana pancake trail in South East Asia. Tubing in Laos has become a must-do activity for backpackers in SE Asia from the buzz created by other backpackers wearing the t-shirts.

Intermediaries Outreach Tactics

As it has already been explained, there are two different types of customers, the FIT's (direct consumer) or intermediaries such as Travel Agencies, Tour Operators, Affinity Groups, among others. The means and channels to reach to those intermediaries are different than those used to reach the final consumer. Even more, there are very specific and well established ways to do so within the Travel & Tourism industry.

For any enterprise within the industry to be successful at establishing commercial relationships with intermediaries, it should be important to analyze and implement those strategies that will

Figure 64: Merchandise Suggestions



accommodate to its business model and will most likely translate into higher revenues in the future. Among those possible commercialization strategies:

Online Outreach (electronic sales manuals, sell sheets, image galleries, newsletters)

A vast majority your potential clients might be located abroad or in a different region of your same country; therefore performing in person promotion can be difficult and expensive to do. That is why online resources will be very important to reach out for those potential or already existing customers.

You, as the manager of the enterprise, should have available descriptive information about your services and infrastructure including images and/or videos and if possible it should be available in more than one language (those from where your customers come from mainly). This information should be available to be sent to any intermediary that wants to learn about your enterprise's services.

Although it is not necessary to have separate websites for each type of client, it is important that the information aimed to the intermediaries it's located in a different section. With this, it is intended to have available information and pricing relevant to the intermediary, which might (and most likely will not be) the same as the content that will apply for the final customer that purchases online and directly the services.

Creating brochures, manuals, newsletters, promotions, etc. specialized and relevant for these intermediaries can be a good way to maintain important commercial relationships. The internet makes it much easier, cheaper and more effective to distribute these marketing aids and be able to segment between the different types of clients. It is important though, to take full advantage of these tools.

This material can be segmented and specialized as much as you want or as much as your database of current/potential clients allows it. Nowadays you can take advantage of seasons, festivals, special events, in your destination to create specialized offers or promotions and market it online to, for example, identified affinity groups interested in such activity, season, festival, etc.

FAM Trips (Travel agents/Tour operators)

FAM Trips, an abbreviation for Familiarization Trips are other available tools to promote and sell an enterprise's services and products. Target audiences for FAM Trips are usually Press or the already defined Intermediaries. In this chapter we will concentrate on FAM Trips aimed to intermediaries, since those for the press have more components of PR than Sales.

A FAM Trip consists on bringing a group of people (can be one or more intermediaries together) and give them for free a "sample" of your services. On exchange it is expected that the intermediary will further promote and sell your specific product. The reasoning behind it it's pretty clear, it is more likely that an intermediary will sell something that he/she knows and has experienced itself than something he/she only knows by pictures or through a brochure.

Certain considerations must be made about FAM trips though. These can be costly , since in the case of a lodge or B&B it is using available space and rooms that could eventually have been paid by other customers. On the other hand, the investment made on these tours does not necessarily translate into sales. Such effort doesn't guarantee that an intermediary will sell your services, since –usually- there are no agreements or requirements in order to make part of the tours.

That is why it is important to define the relevance of such intermediary to the core business of your enterprise and the real potential that this represents. Although it will always be uncertain and it might translate into further sales or not, the better you understand the relevance of this intermediary, the better you will be prepared for the outcome in the future and will be easier to evaluate the results.

Tourism Tips! FAM Trips

In order to make a successful FAM Tour, you **can**:

- Partner with other nearby, complementary enterprises to offer a more complete service. i.e.: if a B&B wants to organize a FAM trip and it's thinking about inviting some travel agencies, it should work together with local restaurants and local tour operators that offer some activities in the region. This will make the tour better structured for the travel agent and can make it less expensive for you since you will not need to cover every part of the tour.
- Partner with the local DMO or even with the National Tourism Office to identify the best intermediaries to invite and eventually get funding or other type of help from these organizations.



In order to make a successful FAM Tour, you must:

- Have carefully planned in advance every single detail of the tour
- Be prepared to serve these visitors the best possible
- Offer a flawless, excellent service
- Spare no effort on what is being offered to the visitors, regardless of the expenses.

If your enterprise cannot guarantee completion of these four previous bullets, you might not be prepared to implement FAM Trips yet, and it might be better not to do it until ready.

Lastly, it is very important -as with all of these Sales & Distribution efforts- to perform constant follow up with the intermediaries in order to measure the effectiveness of the FAM Trip.

Specialty Travel Agent Programs (webinars)

Once again, the Internet it's a very helpful resource to conduct sales and promotion efforts. Training the intermediaries about features and types of services offered by an enterprise it's a key way to increase sales. For a sales person – even if he/she hasn't been in the actual premises – knowing as much as possible about the services would make it easier and more likely that he/she will sell your product. However, as explained above, the geographical distances between you and your clients will make it expensive and hard to reach and train all of them. That is why online training (i.e.: Webinars) are such an important tool nowadays that enterprises can and should use to constantly communicate with clients and inform about their services. Interesting ways of motivating your clients to complete the training can be implemented. It is widely used nowadays to give away prizes, discounts and/or raffles, among those who complete the training and can prove it through a short quiz or a completion of a survey, for example. To achieve a larger penetration and reach even more intermediaries – eventually some you are not aware of – you can, once again, partner with your local DMO or your National Tourism Office, so you can make part of these types of Webinars about your destination. You can be included among the different enterprises promoted at that destination, and offer your services to be part of the prizes for those who complete the training sessions. Besides a larger penetration as explained above, this conjoint effort can be more cost effective for you since you don't have to develop the content and

distribute it. On the other hand, you should be aware that by doing this as a destination, most likely, your main competitors will also be promoted and be part of the content in the Webinar.

Trade Shows (business to business) & Events (including planning considerations)

Within the travel & tourism industries, there are important and very well established trade shows all around the globe. These are other important ways for you to contact potential clients or meet your current ones. Attendance to Trade Shows is highly expensive and therefore, doing it by yourself might not be a feasible option. Once again here, partnering with your DMO or National Tourism Office can be a good choice. Usually, these organizations will attend to the most relevant trade shows for the destination with a booth and the interested enterprises will be able to do so by paying a smaller fee or in some cases for free.

Even if you attend with your destination and you don't have to assume costs of the booth and in general the subscription to the trade show, the costs associated with your attendance will be high and therefore, if you decide to do such an investment, you must prepare very well in advance for the event.

First of all you need to define a strategy and choose what Trade Shows are fundamental for you to attend. There are general tourism trade shows, the bigger ones, held every year such as the World Travel Market in London, ITB in Berlin, FITUR in Madrid, among others. On the other hand, there's specialized trade shows focused on niche markets such as luxury, adventure, ecotourism, boutique hotels, diving, etc. Depending on your business model, what your goals are, who are your main client markets and what your budget is, you should prioritize and identify if, at all, you should attend to these trade shows, and if so, which ones.

You should bring updated promotional material and tariffs to the trade show. In many cases, you should prepare or create specific products for that specific market or segment. For example, you can offer a general lodging service in your hotel, but if you are attending to a diving show, you could probably bring packages that include the diving services or special group packages for divers.

Once you have the promotional material part figured out, you need to identify what potential and current clients will be attending, contact them in advance and inform them you will be there and would like to meet them. Try to make an agenda with appointments before getting there. The information about attendees it's usually available on the trade show's website.

Make sure that the person that will be representing your enterprise in the trade show – if it isn't you – knows very well the product and services and will be ready to answer all kinds of questions that clients might have. Lastly, but probably the most important, is to follow up with those clients. Contact them once you return from the trade show and thank them for stopping by the booth and taking the time to talk to you. Remember once again, that on that some of your direct competitors will be on that same booth too and if you don't follow up on your contacts, someone else will.

Here is a sample calendar of some of the general main tourism trade show for 2011:

2011				
January	11 - 12	2011	ARC2011 (Airline Retail Conference 2011)	Macau
January	15 - 21	2011	ATF	Phnom Penh, Cambodia
January	19 - 23	2011	FITUR	Madrid, Spain
February	7 - 11	2011	<u>PATA Adventure Travel and Responsible Tourism Conference and Mart</u>	Pokhara, Nepal
February	15 - 16	2011	AIME	Melbourne, Australia
March	8 - 10	2011	Asian Aerospace 2011	Hong Kong
March	9 - 13	2011	ITB	Berlin, Germany
March	28 - 30	2011	GIBTM	Abu Dhabi, UAE
April	13 - 15	2011	IT&CM China	Shanghai
May	2 - 5	2011	<u>Arabian Travel Market</u>	Dubai, UAE
May	11 - 12	2011	<u>Asian Hospitality Technology Education Conference</u>	Hong Kong
May	27 - 28	2011	<u>Mekong Tourism Forum</u>	Pakse, Laos
June	8 - 10	2011	Thailand Travel Mart Plus!	Bangkok, Thailand
June	9 - 12	2011	ITE HK	Hong Kong
June	13 - 16	2011	International Luxury Travel Mart - Asia	Shanghai, China
August	30 - 1	2011	CIBTM	Beijing, China
September	20 - 23	2011	IFTM Top Resa	Paris, France
October	4 - 6	2011	IT&CMA + CTW Asia	Bangkok, Thailand
October	19 - 21	2011	<u>ITB Asia</u>	Singapore
November	7 - 10	2011	WTM	London, England
November	14 - 17	2011	Int. Golf Travel Market	Antalya, Turkey
November	29 - 1	2011	EIBTM	Barcelona, Spain
December	5 - 8	2011	ILTM	Cannes, France
2012				
January		2012	ATF	Minado, Indonesia

Figure 65: Travel Trade Show Calendar

Visits to Sales Partners' Offices

Though it can be expensive, visiting your sales partners or potential ones on their offices can be highly effective. There's nothing like an in person meeting, and different than in the trade show where the environment can be chaotic, here you will have the full attention of your client for you.

As already mentioned before, the geographical situation of the intermediaries makes visits time consuming and expensive. However, there might be some very important clients or markets that are worth the expense.

For instance, you have defined as part of your strategy that you want to increase the presence of a certain market, let's say the German one, in your hotel because every time more and more Germans are coming to your destination, they spend a lot and your competitors are getting most of that clientele. A

more effective/rapid way to make it happen is to directly go there, make an agenda with appointments with the intermediaries that will lead those German clients to purchase your services, and present them with your offer.

To do this it is important to have planned the agenda beforehand and have identified who are those main players you definitely need to visit once there.

On the other hand, let's say your main market, already established, is the UK. Your main clients are there and a large portion of your revenues come from clients over there. In that case, a trip to visit your clients can be a more suitable way to "follow up", letting them know they are important for you, hear their concerns, train their sales forces, etc. Although this might look expensive and unnecessary, this is a way to strengthen your commercial relationships with them.

5.4 Marketing Monitoring and Evaluation

Being able to monitor the effectiveness of the sales & promotion efforts implemented is crucial and a very important step in order to define future strategies and make necessary changes to effectively turn promotion into revenues.

Some of these activities might not translate directly into sales in a short-term period; especially when new markets are being opened or new clients are being pursued. If this is the case, it is very important to do constant follow up on the contacts that have been made in order to understand what needs to be done to convert them into an active client.

In order to make this whole process of monitoring and evaluating easy and organized, it is important to keep a consistent and easy to manage database of the contacts that have been made through the implemented sales & promotion efforts. An example of the database could be:

Company Name	Location	Contact Person	Title	Contact Information	How was contact made?	Comments
ABC Travel	UK	John Smith	Marketing Manager	abc@abc.com	XYZ Trade show	Interested in diving packages, possible group for 2011, follow up for this group
Hola Viajes	Spain	Maria Rodriguez	Programming Mgr	maria@hola.com	FAM trip organized by DMO in June 2010	Interested in including it for 2012 brochure
YXZ Travel	Germany	James Robinson	General Manager	james@yxz.com	Contacted us through website	Already started to send clients. Interested in special promotions for low season. Follow up and send special promotions

Table 9: Sales Lead Database

From a simple table like the one above, it is possible to come up with several actions that need to be taken in order to materialize these sales:

In the first example it will be important to follow up with the contact in order to quote for the group once the time has come and also to send the diving package information. For the second example it will be important to follow up during 2011 to provide the necessary information to be included in the brochure for 2012. If these measures are not taken, most likely you will not be included in the brochure and the group will not be using your services. As mentioned before, if you don't do it, someone else will and this business opportunity will probably end up in the hands of those who effectively did the follow up.

Both these examples are illustrations of when a certain sales & promotion activity will yield into sales - if it does at all - in a medium to long term period of time. That is why, in these cases just measuring sales it's not a good indicator.

In the third case, this is an already existing customer. Here it is important to respond to the client with the specific requests he has in order to generate more revenues. However, it is easier to track here the effectiveness of what has been done, because it can be measured in generated revenue.

When analyzing the performance of the already existing customers it is important to define whether it will be measured and compared with previous periods of time, in terms of revenue or number of passengers, or both.

Sometimes one indicator can be more accurate than other. Especially when currency issues play an important role, measuring revenues in local currency might not be the most accurate way to do it. This analysis could show that you increased or decreased your sales in a disproportionate way due to the changes in the exchange rate. That is why, it is important to perform both types of analysis – revenues and passengers – and understand how a client is doing in both fronts, whether it is growing or not. Possibly a client it's representing more revenues for you and less passengers, which is not a bad thing, because what they are doing it's sending passengers that are spending more, however if both analysis are not done together it's hard to interpret this behavior.

From those analyses it is possible to come up with future marketing and sales activities to implement. It can be identified who are the most important clients, who should you visit, if there are growing niche markets, what origin countries are growing best and plan a visit to those countries, or even, where should you stop visiting or what trade shows are not worth going anymore.

To conclude, the key issue for making an accurate and good process of monitoring and evaluating it's to have organized and reliable sources of information, i.e. the databases and the sales reports of your enterprise.

As long as you have this information available and organized, the way you use it will depend highly on your expectations, the growth strategy you established for your enterprise and its maturity stage. As explained before, it is very different to open new markets than to maintain already existing clients and of course the better positioned and the longer you have been in the market, the measurements and performance goals will be different that if you are just in an initial stage.